

Theology 101 - Redemption
 March 6, 2022
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What is redemption?	
A.	Redemption is the act of God which sets us free from the power of evil, sin, and death.
Q.	How did God prepare us for redemption?
A.	God sent the prophets to call us back to himself, to show us our need for redemption, and to announce the coming of the Messiah.
Q.	What is meant by the Messiah?
A.	The Messiah is one sent by God to free us from the power of sin, so that with the help of God we may live in harmony with God, within ourselves, with our neighbors, and with all creation.
Q.	Who do we believe is the Messiah?
A.	The Messiah, or Christ, is Jesus of Nazareth, the only Son of God.

Scripture

Old Testament

- God-Israel Relationship
 - God as the rescuer from adversity established even before the exile
 - Redeeming Israel from Slavery in Egypt
 - Future Redemption from Destruction and or Exile
 - Association of God's redemption with rescue and mercy give the individual hope that God will redeem one from punishment
- Eschatological Age of Redemption
 - Entire people would be gathered from all places of exile
 - Live in the promised land with abundance
 - People would be secure
 - The Davidic monarchy would be restored
 - Cultic priesthood also restored
 - All of Israel would obey God's Torah
 - Supposes there will have been a period of repentance by some prophets

New Testament

- Two main words translated as redeem
 - One means to buy
 - To ransom
 - Obtaining release by payment of ransom
- Influenced by OT expectation of deliverance
- Social background of slave redemption was well known and provided a metaphor
 - Buying slaves in order to give them freedom
- Redemption in the 1st century was much more narrowly defined
- Modern understanding is that it is a metaphor for the whole saving act, while NT writers used it more precisely in the context of social customs
- “For the Son of man also come...to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45, Matthew 20:28). Not in Luke
- Paul’s understanding comes close to the custom of manumission (buying slaves to give them freedom)
- Connection between redemption and the blood of Christ is in Colossians, Ephesians
- To whom is the price being paid? (Atonement)
- Freedom for what?
- Bondage to God for service and full life
- Freedom from bondage to the law
- Paul also describes redemption as adoption
- Ransom to Satan was advanced by some of the early church fathers (Irenaeus and Origen)
- Some theologians have rejected the idea of Christ’s death as a payment. They see redemption as deliverance from cosmic alienation.

Summary of Christian Thought

- Redemption is accomplished through incarnation and the death and resurrection of Christ
- It is both deliverance from sin and restoration of full relationship with God
- Different historical periods and traditions may emphasize one more than the other
- Greek tradition is more about the restoration
- Latin Fathers gave primary importance to the expiation of sin
- Depends what we think is happening on the cross (atonement).
- Some theologians, especially Augustine connected it to an original sin that needed erasing
- Anselm held that there was a violation of God’s original plan which needed satisfaction
- Aquinas disputed this, stating that redemption was a free gift from God to man who does not have capacity to redeem himself.
- Reformation claimed that we did not have capacity to cooperate

Questions for reflection

- Do you experience this primarily as deliverance from something? Or restoration of relationship?
- How does this support your faith journey?
- How does this connect to your understanding of sin and forgiveness?

¶ Praise - George Herbert

King of Glorie, King of Peace,
I will love thee:
And that love may never cease,
I will move thee.

Thou hast granted my request,
Thou hast heard me:
Thou didst note my working breast,
Thou hast spar'd me.

Wherefore with my utmost art
I will sing thee,
And the cream of all my heart
I will bring thee.

Though my sinnes against me cried,
Thou didst cleare me;
And alone, when they replied,
Thou didst heare me.

Sev'n whole dayes, not one in seven,
I will praise thee.
In my heart, though not in heaven,
I can raise thee.

Thou grew'st soft and moist with tears,
Thou relentedst:
And when Justice call'd for fears,
Thou disentedst.

Small it is, in this poore sort
To enroll thee:
Ev'n eternitie is to short
To extoll thee.