

Armagh Baptist Church Bible Studies
Wednesday 3rd March 2010 – 8:00pm

1 Peter 1:17-21 – ‘The Cost and Effect of our Redemption’

Introduction

The key verse in our passage last week was v.16:

‘Be holy, because I am holy.’

So we were thinking about **Holiness** last time.

The key verses in our passage this evening are v.18-19.

These verses are all about **Redemption**.

‘Redemption’, for some, is an old fashioned word. But it is a very important word that is used throughout the N.T. to describe our salvation.

In fact, it is not just a N.T. word; it actually has its origins in the O.T.

‘Redemption’ is a word that comes from the slave market.

A slave was allowed to buy back his freedom if he was able to save up enough money and pay it to his master. This ransom payment was enough to buy his freedom from slavery.

But if the slave himself could not afford the price, then somebody else could pay the ransom price for him, and then be quite within their rights to set the slave free.

In the O.T. the Hebrews were slaves in Egypt (See Exodus ch.1).

Joseph, the great Hebrew hero of the famine years, was dead and obviously forgotten about by the time another Pharaoh came to power.

This new Pharaoh saw that the Hebrews had become very numerous, and he feared they would one day rise up and fight against Egypt from within.

So Pharaoh’s way of dealing with the problem was to subject the Hebrews to forced labour as slaves for 400 years.

But God saw the plight of his people in Egypt and he decided to bring them up out of Egypt into their own land *‘flowing with milk and honey’* – The Promised Land.

In Exodus 3:7-8, He met Moses at the burning bush and said that he had seen the misery of his people in Egypt. He knew about their slavery, he was concerned about their suffering, and so he said,

*‘I have come down to **rescue** them from the hand of the Egyptians.’*
(That word **rescue** has the idea of **redemption** in it).

God was going to redeem his people from their slavery in Egypt and give them the gift of a new life in the Promised Land (see Exodus 6:6-8).

It’s always important to remember the relationship between the Old and New Testaments in our Bibles:

‘The New is in the Old concealed; the Old is in the New revealed.’

There in the Old Testament picture of Israel’s redemption from physical slavery in Egypt, we have a picture of what would become clear for us in the New Testament – our need to be redeemed *spiritually* from our slavery to sin. In order for that to happen, a price had to be paid to set us free from our slavery to sin.

Well, here in 1 Peter 1:17-21 we are brought face to face with:

- How much our Redemption **cost**
- How **valuable** a thing our Redemption is, and
- How we should **treasure** it and not give it up lightly.

Remember, the people that Peter was writing to were about to face hard times. They would soon be tortured or pressurized to try to make them give up their Christianity. If they were going to stand firm for the Lord then they were going to have to see just how valuable a thing they had in their Redemption. They had to value it as precious.

Redemption speaks of three things:

1. Your Rescue from Your Past (v.18)

The Hebrews of the O.T. were rescued from their past life of slavery and forced labour in Egypt. What have we as believers been rescued from?

(v.18) *‘You were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers.’*

Peter says we were rescued from an empty and meaningless existence without Christ! Do you agree with that statement? Do you regard your past life before conversion as an empty and meaningless existence?

Was Peter referring to the past lives of Gentiles believers?

Those who had lived in paganism, myths, legends, sin, immorality, idolatry, fear, and superstition. They had no meaning in life; no purpose for living. Life was cheap. Lives were taken lightly. They were in bondage to the empty traditions that had been handed down through the generations from father to son. But what was the point of it all? Was that what Peter was referring to?

Or was Peter referring to the past lives of Jewish believers as well?

Was Judaism an empty way of life that had been handed down from their forefathers too? Well, in a sense it was. Even though it was the revealed

religion of the living and true God that had been handed down. The problem was, that it too had become meaningless and empty – because it had become a matter of following mere empty rituals – it was just another religion! It had become a matter of just keeping rules and regulations, but nobody quite seemed to know the reasons why anymore. It was just the way they had always done things! They *'honoured God with their lips, but their hearts were far from Him!'* (Matthew 15:8).

Do you recognise this?

Whether your past was a religious past or a non-church-going past, whether it was 'good living' or 'living in sin' it was meaningless and empty until you met Christ personally for yourself, and trusted in Him as your Saviour! In Christ, you have been rescued from an empty and meaningless existence when you were...

'...without hope and without God in this world!' (Eph 2:12)

Listen to Ephesians 2:1-5.

That's what you have been rescued from. Your Redemption first of all is God rescuing you from your past emptiness, and from your slavery to sin.

But in order for this to happen...

2. Your Ransom had to be Paid (v.19-20)

A slave could be set free when the going rate for a slave had been paid. Either by the slave himself or by someone else who was willing to pay the price of his Redemption.

- In Genesis 37:28 the brothers sold Joseph for 20 pieces of silver as a slave into Egypt, to go to work in Potiphar's household.
- In Matthew 26:15 Judas agrees with the Chief Priests, the Jewish Religious Leaders, to betray Jesus into their hands for just 30 pieces of silver. Just the price of a common slave, was the value that Judas placed on his master, Jesus. Thousands of years had passed between Joseph in the OT and Jesus in the NT, but the value placed on a slave hadn't gone up much, had it?

But Peter says in v.18:

'For you know, that it was not with perishable things such as silver or (even) gold that you were redeemed... but with the precious blood of Christ – a lamb without blemish or defect... chosen before the Creation of the world, but revealed in these last times for your sake.'

Silver and gold could never have paid the price of our Redemption.

There was only one thing that could, and that was the unblemished sacrifice of a perfect life in the sight of a holy God for our sins. There was only ever one person that fitted that description and that was Jesus Christ, God's one and only Son – *'The Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!'* (John 1:29).

But why was that the price for our Redemption?

Why was that the price that had to be paid to set us free from sin's slavery?

Genesis 2:17 – The penalty for sin was always **death**.

Hebrews 9:22 – The only way sin could ever be forgiven was for **blood** to be shed – i.e. a blood sacrifice was required.

Exodus 12:1-5 – The lamb for the sacrifice had to be spotless, unblemished, without any defects – it had to be **perfect**.

God's plan for our Redemption had been set from eternity past - even before sin entered this world. It didn't take God by surprise – His Lamb had already been chosen (v.20). And throughout the Old Testament God was preparing the way for the coming of this perfect Lamb through the symbolism of all the lambs that had been sacrificed for sin in Israel. They were only pictures of what was needed. They weren't the real thing. Only Jesus' death could actually pay the price for your Redemption and mine, from our sinful and meaningless existence without God.

That's why Jesus should be so precious to us. That's why His shed blood was so costly. It cost God everything, and yet we are given it freely, with no charge, entirely out of His Grace.

Do you really value the price that Jesus has paid for you?

The full price has been paid. There is nothing more any of us have to do or to pay. We simply receive it by faith because it is marked: 'Paid in Full'!

3. Your Reward that is in Prospect (v.21)

God didn't rescue the Hebrews out of Egypt, and he didn't pay the price of their redemption, just to let them wander around in the desert for 40 years. No, God had a future reward in store for them – The Promised Land – *'a land flowing with milk and honey!'*

Likewise, God has redeemed us, He's paid the ransom price for our sin, He's taken our penalty and poured it out on Jesus instead. He's rescued us from our past, from our sin, and from Hell itself. But more than that, He has a reward waiting for us as well – *'Our Promised Land'* – Heaven! Glory! (Read v.21)

- 'Through Jesus you believe in God.'
- 'Your faith and hope are in God.'
- And what did God do for Jesus? (v.21)

© Ian Grant

Answer: *'He raised him from the dead, and glorified him'* in heaven!

And if we believe God did that for Jesus, then we believe that everyone who has put their trust in Jesus and his perfect sacrifice for them on the cross, are going to experience the same as Jesus did!

One day we are going to die. One day Peter's readers were going to die – maybe at the hands of their Roman persecutors. But if Jesus had redeemed them, and if Jesus has redeemed us, then that will not be the end!

We, like them, will be raised from the dead, and we, like them, will be glorified with the Lord Jesus Himself in the presence of God, in Heaven, for all eternity!

The One who loved us so much, that He was willing to pay the ransom price for our sins – we are going to see Him face to face, and the same future that awaits Him, the very Son of God, also awaits us as the children of God!

That's why we can keep our faith and our hope in God, no matter what this world throws at us! Even if they take our lives, they can't take this blessed hope from us! If God can raise Jesus up from the dead, then He can raise us up from the dead too! And then our Redemption will be truly complete! Our bodies as well as our souls will be redeemed then (Rom 8:11, 23-25).

Conclusion

So we have seen this evening, what it cost God, 'the Holy One' to pay the ransom price for our sin. We've seen the Cost of Our Redemption.

- We have been **Rescued** from our past meaningless existence.
- We know that our **Ransom** price has been paid.
- We know there is a **Reward** in prospect ahead of us.

If that is the value that God placed on us, to redeem us at such a tremendous cost to himself, then surely we ought to value our Redemption much more highly than we do.

And when the going gets tough, as it may well do in the future in terms of persecution, let's not be tempted to give it all up too lightly, but keep hold of it by keeping that blessed hope in view.