

# **Redemption**

## A Study on Romans 3:24b

by Dr. Jack L. Arnold

In our last lesson, I said that many scholars consider Romans 3:21-31 to be the most important paragraph in the whole Bible. Words such as “sin,” “righteousness,” “justification,” “redemption,” “propitiation,” “grace” and “faith” all appear in this short portion of Scripture. I went on to say that if you do not know the meaning of these words, you can never understand and appreciate salvation. One sweet little girl, who listened attentively, later asked her mother about my statement. She said, “Mommy, I don’t know the definitions of those words, but I know I have trusted in Jesus. Is it true that I’m not saved if I don’t know the meaning of those big words?” Bless her heart! She did not quite understand what I was saying, but her heart was right before the Lord. If a person has placed her faith and trust in Jesus Christ for salvation from sin, she is saved. Salvation is so simple that even a child can believe and be genuinely saved. However, if we are going to understand and appreciate our salvation, we must come to know what the Bible teaches on the subject. We must begin to plum the depths of salvation so we can rejoice in it constantly.

### REVIEW — Romans 3:21-23a

*Righteousness* (3:21): Writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Paul has told us that God has provided a righteousness in Christ that will make a person acceptable before God. God will accept only this righteousness and no other because it is perfect, and man must have a perfect righteousness if he is to stand in the presence of a perfectly righteous God. This is a righteousness that is neither felt nor experienced, but which is accredited to one’s account the moment he believes on Christ. It is a righteous standing or position before God. This righteousness is apart from the Mosaic Law or any other works system. A person cannot be saved by works, but only by grace through faith in the perfect work of Jesus Christ for sin.

*Faith* (3:22): This righteousness can be the possession of any person who exercises faith and trusts Jesus Christ as personal Lord and Saviour.

*Sin* (3:23): This righteousness is needed because all have sinned and fallen short of the glory [perfection] of God.

*Justified* (3:24a): To be justified means to be declared righteous. When a sinner believes on Christ, Christ’s righteousness is imparted to him and at that moment God

declares him righteous based on the righteousness of Christ, not the righteousness of the sinner.

*Grace* (3:24a): A person is justified (declared righteous) freely or without a cause (as a gift) simply because of God's grace. No one deserves salvation, and every one deserves hell. If a person is headed for eternal judgment, it is because he has wilfully chosen this destiny. If a person is saved and bound for heaven, it is purely by God's grace. Some people feel that they have done God a favor by trusting in Christ, but grace tells us that God has done the Christian a favor by permitting him to trust the Saviour.

Today, our emphasis is often wrong even though our hearts are right. Our heart relationship may be right but our theology slanted. This misunderstanding of grace is seen in some of our names and slogans. For example, there is nothing wrong with the name "Youth for Christ," but I think it gives the idea that it is "nice" to be for Christ. Perhaps we should say, "Christ for Youth," indicating Christ's grace and Lordship. "Are you on Christ's team?" is a question that indicates, in my mind, that we are doing Christ a favor by serving him, that he is lucky to have us. Actually Christ is the coach. He chooses the team, and it is our privilege to play ball with him. He has done us a favor by putting us on his team. "Christ needs you!" is another statement often made. Christ does not need us — but we need him desperately, for he is the only way to heaven and the only one who can give us purpose for living.

#### REDEMPTION — Romans 3:24c

"Through the redemption." Paul has told us that the cause of our justification is God alone. Now he says the *means* of this justification is redemption. The means that God uses to justify sinners is the death of Jesus Christ for sin. There are several Greek words used for "redemption." The meanings of these words are "to purchase," "to purchase out," "to pay a ransom and buy," and "to pay a ransom and set free." When put together the meaning is "to purchase out of sin and set free by the paying of a ransom price." The unsaved man is a slave to sin, and in bondage at the slave market of sin. Through the death of Christ, God paid the ransom for sinners and set them free forever from the guilt and penalty of sin:

"Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your father; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Pet. 1:18-19).

The blood of Christ speaks of his sacrificial, substitutionary sacrifice for sin. Every sacrifice in the Old Testament looked forward to Christ, the lamb, who would be the sacrifice

for sin. A woman once said to me, “Christianity is a bloody religion, and it repulses me to think about it!” We cannot take the blood out of Christianity, for without it there is no forgiveness of sin. Without it there is no Christianity!

Nor silver, nor gold hath obtained my redemption,  
 No riches of earth could have saved my poor soul;  
 The blood of the cross is my only foundation,  
 The death of my Saviour now maketh me whole.

I am redeemed, but not with silver,  
 I am bought, but not with gold;  
 Bought with a price, the blood of Jesus,  
 Precious price of love untold.

One purpose of our redemption is the forgiveness of sin:

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace” (Eph. 1:7).

“In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Col. 1:14).

Another purpose of redemption is that redeemed sinners might be a purchased possession:

“But ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people [people for a possession] that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light:” (1 Pet. 2:9).

The price was the highest that could ever be paid for a slave in bondage to sin: the death of God’s Son, Jesus Christ!

Still another purpose for our redemption is that we might live holy lives. The Christian is no longer his own master, for he has been bought with the death of Christ, and now Christ is to become his absolute Lord and Master:

“What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your Spirit, which are God’s” (1 Cor. 6:19-20).

There can be no true comprehension of redemption apart from the knowledge that Christ bought us to set us free from sins, in order that we might become the servants of righteousness.

Not too long ago archeologists discovered some very valuable business and personal letters written in Koine Greek. These are called the Chester-Papyri writings. One of the letters was about a slave woman who was put up for sale in the slave market. Apparently she was quite attractive, and would have made a fine slave for any master. A trader purchased this woman for a very high price. After the purchase was completed, for no reason other than the good pleasure of his will, he told the woman, "I have paid a high price for you and have bought you out of slavery, and now I set you free forever. You never have to be my slave or anyone's slave again." He then turned and walked away, leaving the woman standing there free.

A few minutes later the trader heard hard-running footsteps behind him, and a weeping woman's voice crying, "Sir, Sir!"

He said, "What do you want with me, woman? I have set you free forever."

The woman cried out, "My Lord, for your kindness and graciousness in setting me free, I will voluntarily be your slave forever. You are now my master!"

So it is for the Christian. When he comes to understand that he was a slave to sin and that Christ purchased him out of slavery, he voluntarily makes himself a slave of Christ. Oh, what grace!

## CONCLUSION

Every person born into this world owes a debt to God because of sin. There is no way he can pay this debt. God must pass judgment on him because he cannot pay the debt for his sins. However, God has provided a way whereby another, Jesus Christ, has already paid the debt. This debt was paid at the cross when Jesus Christ died there for the sins of men. If a person will trust in Jesus Christ, the payment for sin will be accredited to his account, and God will consider the debt paid. Why? Because Christ has paid the debt for the sinner.

Let us suppose I was given a traffic ticket for exceeding the speed limit. I was guilty before the law and in debt to the law. When I appeared in court, the judge listened patiently to my story and was even somewhat sympathetic. But I had broken the law, and he imposed a fine of \$95.00 or three days in jail. I had no money, and so would have to be locked up — the just result of breaking the law. As I was about to despair, the judge said, "Mr. Arnold,

I will pay the fine for you.” As he laid the money out he said, “Mr. Arnold, you may go now.” All I could do was thank him for his graciousness and leave as a free man. The judge passed a just sentence on me, but then paid the debt for me. I could have rejected his gracious offer, but I would have been a fool to do so. After I accepted, I would certainly want to do anything for that judge that I could.

So it is in salvation. Men are in debt to God because they have broken God’s law through sin. They cannot pay the debt themselves, and must face the consequences: eternal judgment. God has sent his Son, Jesus Christ, to pay the debt for them. If they are to be saved, they must recognize that Christ died for their sins and paid their debt — that he took their place. The death of Christ must become personal. Only then is one really saved from sin. By faith a person says, “I’m a sinner and condemned before God, but Christ bore my sin, bore my curse, bore my condemnation, died in my place, paid my penalty, bore my guilt.”

When you realize that Christ has purchased you out of the slave market of sin, Christianity becomes personal and you feel eternally indebted to Christ, so much so that you want to say, “My Lord, I can never repay you for your love and grace in redeeming me, but I will give you all that I have, and that is my life. Lord, what would you have me to do?” Then your song will become:

On Christ Almighty vengeance fell,  
That would have sunk a world to hell;  
He bore it for a chosen race,  
And thus became a hiding place.