

Redemption – What Price?

Louis Garbi

“For you were bought at a price, therefore glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s (1 Corinthians 6:20).

Being purchased stresses things the Lord wants us to remember. We belong to God. Connected to this is how precious we are to Him. We are dear to Him. Because of sin, a price had to be paid — the price of redemption. The price was commensurate with the value of who we are and what we can become.

God foreshadowed this in several different ways.

The firstborn of man and beast in Israel were offered to God. Those of the male babies were redeemed with money.

So it shall be, when your son asks you in time to come, saying, “What is this?” that you shall say to him, “By strength of hand the LORD brought us out of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And it came to pass, when Pharaoh was stubborn about letting us go, that the LORD killed all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrifice to the LORD all males that open the womb, but all the firstborn of my sons I redeem” (Exodus 13:11-15).

And those redeemed of the devoted things you shall redeem when one month old, according to your valuation, for five shekels of silver, according to the shekel of the sanctuary, which is twenty gerahs (Numbers 18:16).

Though five shekels seems strange for the valuation of a man, it was sufficient for remembrance. It was a kind of Passover observance with every firstborn male. Another example of redemption concerned the selling and restoration of property.

If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee, and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession (Leviticus 25:25-28).

These examples demonstrate a price paid for redemption. As a result, property was restored to the rightful owner, and the firstborn males of God’s people were able to live.

Our original condition was one of innocence, free from sin. We see this in the beauty of an infant’s gaze and the sweetness of children. It is testified by Jesus, who used the example of childhood innocence: *“Assuredly, I say to you, unless you are converted and become as little children, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven” (Matthew 18:3).* This speaks of childhood’s innate value, prized by God. Though born in innocence, we do not have the power to retain it. We grow to recognize the difference between good and bad behavior. We see the value of good behavior and the trouble of bad behavior. However, we do not have the strength to keep ourselves from evil. We become sullied through sin. We become like the slaves of Egypt, property sold to someone outside the family. In such a condition, our potential is the only thing left of value. And God does value the potential of all. What is the price for redemption?

“He shall see the labor of His soul and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, For He shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:11). *“The labor of His soul,”* refers to the suffering of Jesus. He was put to torment and death bearing our iniquities. That was the price. In what way was God satisfied?

- *“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son” (John 3:16).*
- *“for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10).*

- *“The Lord is . . . not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9).*

These simple statements tell us what would satisfy God. He has the desire and love that all should be saved. How did the death of Jesus accomplish this? God did not demand blood in the way of pagan cruelty, shedding blood for lust. He required a different way. What would one think of a mother who died to protect her baby? Most people would instantly recognize love in such a thing. So was God’s love for us and so much more. Jesus gave His life, bearing our iniquities, all the while cherishing what we might become: *“the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God” (Hebrews 12:2).* What our lives would become was the joy set before Jesus.

Sometimes, we hear that Jesus paid the penalty for our sins. I think what is meant is this: He did for us what we could not do for ourselves. The penalty for sin is the lake of fire. There is no redemption there. Jesus is not in the lake of fire, suffering for our sins. Rather, He did what was needed for us to be forgiven. That was the payment. The scriptures use the word “ransom.” It speaks of Jesus, *“who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time” (1 Timothy 2:6).* Ransom serves as a metaphor for what was needed. The means for salvation was needed.

Again, what was needed? Someone greater than us (our Creator) who could see our potential. Someone to become one of us, to know the burdens of life in the flesh. Someone to love us. Someone to bear our guilty actions without turning away, even to die for us. Someone to conquer death as one of us. Someone who could truly be a Mediator and Advocate between us and God. Things such as these satisfy the requirements for us to be purchased. What is needed from us? God calls us to have faith that such a thing has happened and to yield. In this is found our love for Him.

The opening quotation to this article contains an admonition, *“glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which are God’s.”* Belonging to another can be readily understood in family life. Husband and wife belong to each other. Their children belong to them. Through the love of their parents, children sense that quality of belonging and feel secure. Because of Jesus, we belong to God – an unceasing belonging that sustains us even through the death of the body. What rich compulsion to do what is right! What resolve to follow Jesus! The admonition is there because we haven’t reached the finish line.

And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear, knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot (1 Peter 1:17-19).