

100 BIBLE LESSONS

Give these lessons to people you visit, youth groups, hospital patients, church visitors and new members. Use them in Sunday School, bus ministry, jail services, nursing homes, Christian schools, small discussion groups and many other places. God's Word will answer your questions and help solve your problems. For Bible study purposes. Not to be sold.

LESSON 19 – REDEMPTION

INTRODUCTION

Redemption plays a central role in biblical theology. The basic shape of the doctrine is formed in the Old Testament. But the full meaning of all that God has had eternally in mind is unveiled only in the New Testament.

I. HEBREW WORDS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Three different Hebrew words are translated "redeem" or "ransom." Each presents and emphasizes a particular aspect of God's great concern for humanity. Each word is cast against the background of helplessness. Each finds human beings captured, held captive by the power of forces they cannot overcome. Only by the intervention of a third party can bondage be broken and the person freed.

1. *Padah* was originally used commercially to indicate a transfer of ownership (Lev 19:20). The transfer came through payment or some equivalent transaction.
2. The verb *ga'al* means "to play the part of a kinsman," that is, to act on the behalf of a relative in trouble or danger. The verb and its cognate (*ge'ullah*, "redemption") appear 118 times in the Old Testament. The background to *ga'al* is similar to that of *padah*. In each case, persons or objects are in the power of another, and the one whose person or possessions are held is unable to win release. Then a third party appears, and this person is able to effect release.
3. *Koper*, translated "ransom," comes from *kapar*, "to make atonement." It thus means "to atone by making a substitutionary payment."

II. THE NEW TESTAMENT MEANING OF REDEMPTION

The conception of redemption is rooted not in Greek culture or in Roman law but in Old Testament revelation. Redemption is a family matter, an expression of the deepest possible relationship. It is never a stranger who has the right to come to the aid of a person who is owned by another or burdened with an unpayable debt. Only the near kinsman, with the resources to rescue, is able to act. Thus, the Greek terms in the New Testament -- *lytroo* and *exagorazo*--must be understood within the basic framework provided by the Old Testament.

New Testament passages make it clear that Jesus' life is the price of redemption (Mt 20:28; Mk 10:45). The redemption that Jesus accomplished by His blood is an eternal redemption (Heb 9:12), intended to so cleanse us that "we may serve the living God" (v. 14; cf. Tit 2:14). Thus, redemption in the New Testament focuses on the condition of the believer, who had been locked in a wicked and empty way of life, and on the price of redemption, the blood of Christ. It also focuses on the result of redemption, a commitment by the believer to serve God.

The New Testament applies the concept developed in the Old Testament to the issue of personal salvation. Each person in our world is in the grip of sin. Sin's bondage can be broken only through Christ's blood. Redeemed, the believer is given a place in the family of God and is called to live a life that reflects his new standing.

CONCLUSION

Only the Scriptures, of all the world's great religious writings, so portray the relation between human beings and God in terms of redemption. Redemption reveals a helpless humanity; and redemption affirms a God whose love drives Him to take the part of the near kinsman. At his own expense, He paid the price needed to win our release.

Notes adapted from "Expository Dict. of Bible Words" pgs. 515-518, Lawrence Richards; Lesson Maker, NavPress.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What justifies us in God's sight? (Rom. 3:24)
2. What is the cost or price of justification with God? (Rom. 3:24)
3. What did God do to provide a means of justification and forgiveness for every person? (Rom. 3:25)
4. How does providing Christ Jesus as a sacrifice demonstrate the justice of God? (Rom. 3:25-26)
5. On what basis can a person brag about his or her righteousness? (Rom. 3:27)
6. What justifies a person in God's sight? (Rom. 3:28)
7. What makes it difficult for many of us to believe that we can gain God's forgiveness by faith in Christ and His redemption alone?
8. Why would God offer His righteousness free to every person?

