

The Satisfaction of Christ Studies in the Atonement 15. Its Results-Continued

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Transcript

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In previous chapters we have pointed out the importance of distinguishing between the work which Christ performed and the results which that work produced. The need for so doing is great if we are to obtain anything more than a confused view of it. Unfortunately many have sadly failed at this point, so that neither they nor their readers have been able to apprehend separately the various parts of the vast whole. Noticeably has this been the case with that aspect of our theme which is now to be before us. Though the work of the Lord Jesus was one and indivisible, yet, as we saw when pondering its nature, it needs to be viewed from various angles. For this reason, among others, the typical altar of sacrifice was not round, but foursquare (Ex. 27:1). In like manner, though the result secured by Christ's work was also one and indivisible, namely, securing the eternal salvation of all for whom He transacted, yet that composite "result," that glorious "salvation," can best be understood when we contemplate its several sides. We now take up — 3. REDEMPTION Not a few have regarded "atonement" and "redemption" as being synonymous terms, but they are not so. Though closely, yea inseparably connected, they are, nevertheless, capable of being considered separately; the one being the cause, of which the other is the effect. Because Christ offered unto God a full and accepted satisfaction, the redemption of His people is the certain fruit, consequence and reward of the same. The "result" of Christ's mediation and the character of the salvation which He secured for God's elect can be most easily grasped when set out under these four words: reconciliation, remission, redemption, righteousness. By saying above that the "result" of Christ's satisfaction is as indivisible as the work itself, we mean that when one of these blessings is imparted, the other three always accompany it. Near the beginning of our last chapter we pointed out how close is the connection between reconciliation and remission of sins (2 Cor. 5:19), and to link up this one with the preceding, we would note how intimate is the relation existing between remission and redemption. In Ephesians 1:7 we read, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins." Sins are "forgiven" or "remitted" by the redeeming blood. The preposition should be duly noted here: it is not "through whom we have redemption" (which presents another phase altogether), but "in whom." Redemption was the Christian's right, not only when the Spirit applied it to him at his regeneration, but also when Christ died. Just as we had condemnation in Adam before we were born into this world, so the elect have redemption in Christ since the time that He was raised from the dead: note that "believing" is not mentioned in Ephesians 1 till verse 12! "Redemption through his blood" is our forgiveness. Not that we are actually pardoned in the blood of His Cross before we believe, but that the pardon was procured by

the redeeming blood, the grant of it was then sealed, and security given that it should in due time be made unto us. The greatness of redemption may best be perceived by contemplating the person of the Redeemer. To none other than the Son of God was entrusted that work which was to secure redemption for His people. The greater the person who is employed in a work, the greater is that work; it is thus in the reckoning and ways of men, how much more shall it be so in the wisdom and ways of God! Kings do not send their sons out on petty errands or trivial services, but only upon that which is high and weighty; and can it be imagined that the King of kings would send forth His Son to redeem, unless that had involved a work of transcendent magnitude? The creating of the universe was a vast enterprise, but God dispatched it with a single fiat: He spake and it was done (Ps. 33:9). But to effect redemption, God sent His own Son from heaven to earth, to live and die. O how great a work was this; the greatest that Himself ever undertook. In approaching this blessed subject of redemption, let us consider, A. Its Signification "The term redemption is borrowed from certain pecuniary transactions among men, as the release of an imprisoned debtor by liquidating his debt, or the deliverance of a captive by paying a ransom. These are transactions with which mankind in general, and especially the Jews and primitive Christians, have been perfectly familiar. Accordingly, both in the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures, the deliverance of man from sin is frequently represented by language borrowed from such negotiations. The term before us is of this nature. It involves all the ideas included in atonement. It supposes sin, which is the cause of imprisonment or captivity. It supposes deliverance by a substitute, the captive or debtor being unable to effect his own escape. And, of course, it supposes also a clear emancipation or restoration as the result of the ransom being paid" (W. Symington). The terms "ransom" and "redemption" when used in connection with the work of Christ are correlative in their import, the former denoting the price paid for the liberation of a prisoner, the latter marking the deliverance which is thus effected. The use of them in connection with our salvation, shows that this is brought about by the interposition of a Substitute, who procures the emancipation of the captive by the tendering of his ransom. By their sins men are brought under obligation to the law and justice of God, which He will not gratuitously fail to demand, and which they are quite incapable of discharging. To the law of God they are debtors; to the justice of God the prisoners. Their deliverance or salvation is not a manumission without price, that is, a simple discharge without compensation. Their salvation is not by an act of power only, effected by the intervention of an arm full of might to secure their escape. Both gratuitous favor (grace) and power are concerned, yet there was more. A price had to be paid, a ransom laid down, every way equivalent to the redemption for which it was offered. Thus, "redemption" is deliverance by ransom. It is possible to conceive (in human affairs) of a price being paid and then, through some miscarriage of justice the prisoner not being freed; but in that case it would not be a "redemption," even though a ransom had been accepted. So also we may suppose a case where a captor, moved by compassion, freed his prisoner; yet though emancipated, he could not be said to have been "redeemed." Two things are absolutely necessary to a "redemption," a ransom paid, and the setting free of the subject or person purchased. The two things, though intimately related, are clearly distinguished in Jeremiah 31:11, "For the Lord hath redeemed Jacob, and ransomed him from the hand of him that was stronger than he." And again, "I will ransom them from the power of the grave; I will redeem them from death" (Hosea 13:14). Thus, we say again, Redemption is the payment of a ransom and the release of the ransomed. Hence it is strictly limited to the people of God. In no sense are the reprobate "redeemed." Election and redemption are of the same extent: they relate to the same individuals, to all such, and to none else. To affirm that any whom Christ redeemed are now in Hell is a flat contradiction in terms, for Hell is a prison (Matthew 5:25; 1 Pet. 3:19). The deliverance or redemption which the ransom-price paid by Christ to Divine justice has effected, consists of three parts. First, there is a complete delivering of His people from the guilt or penalty of sin. This is their Justification. This is set forth in such

Scriptures as the following: "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24), "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us" (Gal. 3:13). Second, there is, in this life, a blessed deliverance from the dominion and bondage of sin. This is their Sanctification. This is set forth in such passages as these: "Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4), "Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation... but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18,19). Third, there is, at the second coming of Christ, final deliverance from the very presence of sin. This is their Glorification. This is contemplated in Luke 21:28, "Lift up your heads, for your redemption draweth nigh," and "waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Rom. 8:23). Redemption is the setting free of those who have been ransomed. The Greek word for "redemption" is actually rendered "delivered" in Hebrews 11:35: "Not accepting deliverance," which means, they refused to accept release from their afflictions on the terms offered by their persecutors, namely, upon the condition of renouncing their faith. Christ is therefore denominated not only "the Redeemer," but "the Deliverer" (Rom. 11:26). That from which He has emancipated His people is set forth in the following passages: "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law" (Galatians 3:13). "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness" (Col. 1:13). "Which delivered us from the wrath to come" (1 Thess. 1:10). "That through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:14, 15). Let us next consider — B. Its Implication Redemption necessarily supposes previous possession. It denotes the restoring of something that has been lost, and that by the paying of a price. Thus we find Christ saying by the Spirit of prophecy, "I restored that which I took not away" (Ps. 69:4)! This was strikingly illustrated in the history of Israel, who, on the farther shores of the Red Sea, sang, "Thou in thy mercy hast led forth thy people which thou hast redeemed" (Exodus 15:13). First, in the book of Genesis, we see the descendants of Abraham sojourning in the land of Canaan; cf. Hebrews 11:9. Later, we see the chosen race in cruel servitude, in bondage to the Egyptians, groaning amid the brick-kilns under the whip of their taskmasters. Then a ransom was provided in the blood of the pascal lamb, following which, the Lord by His mighty hand brought them out of serfdom and brought them into the promised inheritance. In the above type we see three things: a people who were the Lord's; a people in bondage, lost to Him; a people recovered and restored to Him. Says someone, "But how can all these things hold good in the antitype? I can see that Christians were once the Devil's captives, now freed by Christ; but how were they His before He freed them?" Scripture supplies a satisfactory explanation. The type is just as true and accurate in the first point, as it is in the second and third. The redeemed belonged to Christ long before He shed His precious blood to ransom them. They were His by the eternal election of God, His by the Father's love gift: "Thine they were and thou gavest them me" (John 17:6). Yes, they were "chosen in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph. 1:4). But, "in Adam all died" (1 Cor. 15:22), therefore did He come "to seek and to save that which was lost" (Luke 19:10). But through His blood He recovered them: "The church of God, which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Thus, the implication of "redemption" is a double one. First, all the members of Christ's Church belonged to Him in eternity past. Second, through the Fall, they were brought into bondage. All men in their unrenewed state are slaves to sin and Satan, and under the wrath of God. "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin" (John 8:34). Ere Christians were regenerated, "serving divers lusts and pleasures" (Titus 3:3) described their awful state. In the bondage of our ignorance, we supposed that we were free, imagining that liberty consisted of the power to do as we liked, instead of as we ought. Little did we dream that we were in the "snare of the Devil, who are taken captive by him at his will" (2 Tim. 2:26). Nor could we free ourselves. Sin's chains were far too strong for human might to snap. Satan saw to it that we should not break out of his prisonhouse. Man as a fallen

creature is no more a "free agent" than he is a sinless being. "If the Son therefore shall make you free ye shall be free indeed" (John 8:36) would be quite meaningless, if the natural man already possessed liberty. But people will no more bow to this flesh-humbling truth today than they would when Christ Himself uttered it — "we be Abraham's seed and were never in bondage to any man" (John 8:33) was the haughty but lying boast of the Jews. Hence it is that so few seek the redemption which is in Christ Jesus: knowing not that they are bound, they suppose they are already free. This is one of the outstanding marks of these Laodicean days: men boasting that they are rich and increased with goods, and in need of nothing, knowing not that they are "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked" (Rev. 3:17). Yes, redemption presupposes bondage; happy the one who has had his or her eyes opened to see the need for a mightier hand than their own striking off the shackles of self-will, self-love and self-righteousness, which, by nature, bound and held them fast. We now turn to consider — C. Its Effectuation Sin is a debt, whereof God is the Creditor: Matthew 6:12. Debts render men liable to imprisonment for non-payment, so sin has caused God to "shut them all up in unbelief" (Rom. 11:32), nor can any escape till the uttermost farthing has been paid (Matthew 5:26). Man, by his disobedience to God, has been brought into a state of abject wretchedness, such wretchedness as Scripture often expresses by captivity (Isa. 61:1; Ps. 126:4; 2 Tim. 3:6). The Lord, because of our rebellion, both in Adam and personally, did, as the supreme Judge and Governor, deliver us unto Satan, and left us under the power of sin and death. Satan, as the jailor, led us captive at his will, making use of sin and the world as fetters to increase and continue our misery: "Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience: among whom also we all had our conversation in time past in the lusts of our flesh" (Eph. 2:2, 3). From this dreadful state none but Christ could deliver us. In every place in Scripture where our redemption in and by Christ is mentioned, there is an allusion to the law of redemption among the Jews. This law is set forth, most fully, in Leviticus 25, where we find regulations laid down for a two-fold redemption, of persons and possessions. None had a right to redeem but either the person himself, who had made the alienation, or some other that was near of kin to him. But inasmuch as none of Adam's race ever was, or ever will be, able to redeem himself, Another must interpose on his behalf if ever he is to be delivered. This is expressly affirmed by God: "None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him" (Ps. 49:7). Thus, poor sinners were entirely shut up to the merciful intervention of Christ. It was by Him and Him alone, this blessed promise was to be fulfilled: "Thus saith the Lord, Even the captives of the mighty shall be taken away, and the prey of the terrible shall be delivered: for I will contend with him that contendeth with thee, and I will save thy children" (Isa. 49:25). The Redeemer must be Kinsman: "The man is near of kin to us, one that hath the right to redeem" (Ruth 2:20 margin). Thus the covenant-oneness of Christ and His people underlies the truth of redemption. "For both he that sanctifieth and they who are sanctified are all of one: for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2:11) — one from all eternity, one by Him having been appointed their Head. But not only must the Redeemer be federally united to those He redeems, but He must also take upon Him their nature and enter their circumstances, therefore are we told, "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, He also Himself likewise took part of the same; that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil; and deliver them" (Heb. 2:14, 15). So we read again, "God sent forth His Son made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law" (Gal. 4:4, 5). The incarnation of the Son of God most strikingly fulfilled another Old Testament type of redemption. The Mosaic law provided that, in case any person was found murdered, then the nearest to him in blood was to prosecute the murderer and bring him to justice, and this nearest relation, thus avenging the murder, is called by the name of (Ga'al) redeemer, rendered "revenger" in Numbers 25:19. "Satan was the murderer from the beginning (John

8:44) who had given both body and soul a mortal wound of sin, which was certain death and eternal misery, and the Redeemer came to avenge the murder. He took our cause in hand, as being our nearest kinsman, and it cost Him His own life to avenge ours" (Wm. Romaine, 1750). To which we may add, through His death, Christ "destroyed [rendered null] him that had the power of death" (Heb. 2:14). Having accepted the office of Redeemer, having become one with His people in taking upon Him their nature, it was required that He should pay the ransom-price which Divine justice required. Now a "ransom" is something given in the stead of what is ransomed, and this was the vicarious life and death of the Lord Jesus: "The Son of man came, to give his life a ransom for many" (Matthew 20:28). Redemption views Christ as our "Surety" (Heb. 7:22), taking upon Him the liabilities of God's elect, and paying to God the price of their remission. Christ is the great Paymaster of His people's debts: "That by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance" (Heb. 9:15). "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus" (Rom. 3:24): in the first clause the inestimable blessing of justification is ascribed to the free grace of God, being altogether apart from our works, either before or after faith; in the second clause it is attributed to Christ's "redemption": though we are justified gratuitously, yet it is through the purchase of the Son of God. Believers are said to have been "bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:20). To whom was the ransom-price paid? It seems strange that any Christian should experience difficulty in answering such a question, yet even some able Bible students have erred seriously on this point. Arguing that sinners were never in bondage to God, and that they are the captives of the Devil, a theory has been invented that the price of our ransom was paid to Satan himself, which theory can only be rightly denominated "diabolical redemption." Once this theory is held up in its naked hideousness, every renewed soul ought to shrink from it in horror. Surely there is a vast difference between sinners being the captives of the Devil, and his having any legitimate property-rights over them. That man is a slave of Satan is only a secondary result of his bondage. Who delivered him over to Satan, on account of his sins? Only one answer is possible: God Himself. It is by Divine justice that the sinner is bound over to punishment. The Devil is only the executioner of God's righteous sentence. It is to God Himself the debt of obedience and suffering is due. It is God alone who has the right to detain him in prison. The detaining power is the equity of the Divine law and government, but for which, Satan could not hold him in thralldom a single moment. Therefore it was to God, to His inflexible justice, that Christ paid the ransom-price. Man had not sinned against Satan, but against the Divine Lawgiver, to whom alone it belongs to condemn or absolve. And God being satisfied, the Devil has no power over the redeemed, but is put out of office, as the executioner has nothing to do when the judge and the law is satisfied. To say that Christ offered Himself a ransom unto Satan is the most horrible blasphemy. Satan was to be conquered, not satisfied. Our enslaving foe was but the subordinate instrument of God's righteous judgment; why, he cannot so much as tempt men without the immediate permission of God, how much less could he demand from God the precious, precious blood of Christ. The ransom which was paid for our redemption was the blood of Christ (1 Pet. 1:19): this is sometimes set forth as a "price," sometimes as a "sacrifice." These are but one and the same thing under several notions. Now as the "sacrifice" was offered unto God (Eph. 5:2), so was the "price" paid to God, paid to His justice, paid to Him in His character of Judge and Governor. "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son: in whom we have redemption through his blood" (Col. 1:13, 14). The latter verse explains the particular nature of the "deliverance" in the previous one. It is not a mere release, as of a slave liberated by the compassion of his master, nor that of a debtor set free at his constant entreaties by his creditor; nor by the exercise of force only, as Abraham delivered Lot and David his followers from the Amalekites at Ziklag. But this "deliverance" from Satan's dominion is a redemption, a discharge by a ransom-price paid down; there was a rendering all that was

due the law by a Substitute and Surety. The shedding of His blood was the last and greatest act of His mediatorial work on earth. Thus Christ purchased His people out of the hands of vindictive Justice. Thereby He fulfilled that remarkable Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 45:13, "I have raised Him up in righteousness, and I will direct all His ways: He shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the Lord of hosts": the last clause signifies, it was not for personal gain that Christ did this: it was not "for price," though He effected it by price. Because Christ "bought" us (1 Cor. 6:20), we are out of debt, free. There is not a single charge on the heavenly docket against any of His people. No debtor's prison now awaits them. "Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing" (Matthew 5:26): these terrible and hope-destroying words shall never be spoken to any of the redeemed. Because the Representative of God's people was seized by the law, those whom Christ represented must go free. Beautifully was this adumbrated in John 18:8: "If therefore ye seek me, let these go their way." Christ's death was the believer's discharge: "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died" (Rom. 8:33). "On that day shall the priest make an atonement for you, to cleanse you, that ye may be clean from all your sins before the Lord" (Lev. 16:30): if the typical blood so effectively cleansed the people ceremonially, how much more must the antitypical Sacrifice perfectly and eternally deliver from sin! The outcome of the ransom-price paid by Christ is the certain and actual redemption of His people. There is no unavailing redemption in any of the Old Testament types. If land was "redeemed," restoration to its original owner was the certain outcome; if persons were "redeemed," then liberty was actually enjoyed by them. "Deliver him from going down to the pit, I have found a ransom" (Job 33:24), is God's authoritative fiat. Payment God cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding Surety's hand, and then again at mine. Because Christ paid to the full the whole debt which His people owed, Justice demands that the debtors should be liberated. Therefore the unqualifying word goes forth, "And the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads" (Isa. 35:10). D. Its Application "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he hath visited and redeemed his people" (Luke 1:70). "The Church of God which he hath purchased with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). It is never said in Scripture that Christ died to purchase "salvation": it is always His flock, His people, His Church. "The Lord's portion is His people, Jacob is the lot of His inheritance" (Deut. 32:9), and the elect are not only God's inheritance, but His "purchased possession" (Eph. 1:14). By His death Christ paid the ransom-price, and made His people, whom sin had taken prisoners, His own. Therefore does the Father say to Him, "As for thee, by the blood of thy covenant I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit wherein is no water" (Zech. 9:11). Christ has a legal right to their persons, and therefore does God, by His strong arm (in His own appointed time), bring them forth. "He sent redemption unto His people" (Ps. 111:9). Redemption is unto an inheritance: Galatians 4:5-7; Ephesians 1:14. Now just as an earthly parent reserves to himself the right to say (in his will) at what age his heir shall enter upon his estate, so God has appointed the time when each of His redeemed ones shall be freed from the dominion of sin, and when the whole election of grace shall enter their inheritance. As we have seen, the deliverance which Christ has procured for His people is threefold, so also is its application. First, they are freed from the guilt of sin when the Spirit first works faith in them and they are enabled to believe in Christ (Galatians 5:1). Second, they are gradually delivered from the power of indwelling sin, as through the Spirit they are led to "mortify the deeds of the body" (Rom. 8:13). Third, they are completely emancipated from the presence of sin when "there shall come out of Zion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Rom. 11:26, etc.). Each of these is redemption by power, in contrast from by price: cf. Exodus 6:6; Nehemiah 1:10; Psalm 77:15; for the same reason the resurrection of the body, by an act of Divine power, is called a "redemption" (Rom. 8:23). E. Its Manifestation Redemption is unto a life of godliness. "Being now made free from sin, and become servants to God, ye have your fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life" (Rom. 6:22). Those whom

Christ has ransomed are given grace to live a holy life, freed from the bondage of their former corruptions: "redeemed. . . from your vain conversation... with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Pet. 1:18). Those who are not delivered from their previous vain manner of life are not redeemed from hell and damnation, unless God gives them repentance. Let every reader test himself or herself by this sure and certain rule: you have not savingly believed that Christ laid down His life for you, unless you are now yielding up your life to Him: note the words, "in time past" in Ephesians 2:2. Christ has redeemed none that they might continue in a course of self-pleasing. "That we being delivered out of the hand of our enemies might serve Him without fear, in holiness and righteousness before Him, all the days of our life" (Luke 1:74, 75). "Whenever God pardons sin, He subdues it (Micah 7:19). Then is the condemning power of sin taken away, when the commanding power of it is taken away. If a malefactor be in prison, how shall he know that his prince hath pardoned him? If a jailor come and knock off his chains and fetters, and let him out of prison, then he may know that he is pardoned: so if we walk at liberty (Ps. 119:45) in the ways of God, this is a blessed sign He has pardoned us" (Thos. Watson, 1690). Let none make any mistake on this point. Scripture says "who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world" (Gal. 1:4). If, then, you are still in love with the world, a slave to its fashions, a follower of its ways, a companion of its people, you are yet in your sins. "Christ gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar People, zealous of good works" (Titus 2:14). Christ offers Himself to none as a Savior who are unwilling to submit to Him as their Lord. True, He has redeemed us from the "curse of the law," but most certainly not from the righteous requirements of the law. The people of God have been redeemed from their misery, but not from their duty. We have been redeemed "to God" (Rev. 5:9). Renunciation of the world, denial of self, and a daily walk to the glory of God, are the sure marks of all the "redeemed."

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