

SOTERIOLOGY (48)

2) Redemption in the New Testament.

Although the concept of someone being able to pay a required price in order to redeem someone or something else is found in the O.T., it is not until the full revelation of the N.T. that we see its connection to sin. Dr. Chafer observed: “It is therefore to be observed that the doctrine of redemption as set forth by the terms used in the New Testament is a complete fulfillment of the truth foreshadowed in the Old Testament” (Vol. 3, p. 90). Dr. Ryrie adds: “However, little direct association is evident in the Old Testament between redemption and sin” (*Basic Theology*, p. 290).

In the N.T., there are three very important words that give us great insight into the doctrine of redemption:

A. Agorazo (αγοραζω)

The basic meaning of this word is to frequent a marketplace or forum in order to buy or purchase something (G. Abbott-Smith, p. 7). The idea is to buy in the marketplace.

As this relates to salvation, this word teaches the following:

- a. Jesus Christ made the payment for all sinners. II Peter 2:1
- b. Jesus Christ made the payment of His own blood to the Father. Rev. 5:9-10
- c. Jesus Christ bought us which means we are responsible to glorify God by serving Christ. I Cor. 6:19-20; 7:22-23

B. Exagorazo (εξαγοραζω)

The preposition “ek” adds the idea of not only making the necessary payment for something, but also making the necessary payment and then taking the thing out of the place it was in. As it relates to salvation it means to completely take a person out of the condemnation of the Law and out of the bondage of sin. Gal. 3:13; 4:5

The basic meaning of this is to buy out of the market.

C. Lutroo (λυτροω)

The basic meaning of this word is to release by paying a ransom price. The added idea here is not only that Christ’s sacrifice made the necessary payment to purchase sinners out of their bondage of sin, but Christ also actually releases them or frees them from sin.

SOTERIOLOGY (49)

Dr. Chafer writes: “Redemption, in its fullest meaning, as represented by this word, is assurance that Christ has not merely transferred the sinner’s bondage from one master to another; He has purchased with the object in view that the ransomed one may be free” (Vol. 3, pp. 89-90).

1. I Peter 1:18-19 - a tremendous price was paid in order to set us free.
2. Titus 2:14 - the tremendous accomplishment of Christ frees us from all sin.

Both of these passages reveal the fact that having been set free from sin, we should live a holy life of good works.

These words and concepts are more than just intriguing points of interest. During the days of the N.T., a slave could only get out of slavery in two ways: 1) He had to die; 2) He had to be freed. In order for him to be freed, someone had to purchase him and then set him free. Once the slave had been set free, he could voluntarily remain as the servant of the master who loved him enough to set him free. (For an excellent discussion of this, see Francis Lyall, *Slaves, Citizens, Sons*, Academic Books, 1984.)

The picture of the redemption of a slave is exactly that as the N.T. redemption of a sinner. Every person has been a servant of sin (Rom. 6:20). Jesus Christ went to the cross in order to make the necessary payment to God in order to purchase sinners out of the marketplace of sin. Not only did He accomplish that, but He actually set the sinner free from sin (Rom. 6:22). This marvelous freedom that every believer enjoys should prompt all to love Him and to serve Him as a willing servant.

There are only two possible ways one can be freed from sin: 1) Free yourself; 2) Let Christ free you. The terrible problem for man is that he cannot free himself. He cannot make the necessary payment to God in order to be free from sin.

Any man who desires to redeem himself from sin must be willing to ask and answer what am I going to pay to God to buy myself out of this terrible dilemma? The answer is there is nothing any human can pay to God that will cause God to set one free from sin. One cannot be redeemed by money (I Peter 1:18). One cannot be redeemed by works (Rom. 3:27-28). One cannot be redeemed by keeping the Law (Gal. 2:16). One cannot be redeemed by religion. One cannot be redeemed by sincerity. Many of these things seem right to man in order to buy his salvation. However, the Word of God makes it very clear—“There is a way that seems right to a man but its end is the way of death” (Prov. 14:12) (i.e. Jim Marshall, of the Minnesota Vikings, intercepted a pass and took off running down the sidelines toward the end zone. He outran everyone only to discover he ran to the wrong goal. He was sincere—but he was wrong.).

No matter how religious or sincere or giving a man may be, there is only one way to be set free from sin and that is by faith in Jesus Christ. Christ’s sufferings and death provide complete redemption from sin. In Him is life, in Him is freedom (Gal. 5:13).

SOTERIOLOGY (50)

We should not use our freedom from sin as an opportunity to serve the flesh, but through biblical love to serve one another.

Accomplishment #4 - Christ's sufferings and death provide reconciliation between God and man.

In its basic meaning, reconciliation means, as Dr. Ryrie writes, "...a change of relationship from hostility to harmony and peace between two parties" (*Basic Theology*, p. 292).

Reconciliation may be understood as having to do with an estranged relationship that needs to be harmonized. For example, people who are in a hostile relationship with others are exhorted to be reconciled to them (Matt. 5:24; I Cor. 7:11). People who are in a hostile relationship with God, are exhorted to be reconciled to God (Rom. 5:10; II Cor. 5:18-21).

Now the Bible makes it very clear that all people are in serious need of being reconciled to God:

- 1) All people are enemies of God. Rom. 5:10
- 2) All people are sinners against God. II Cor. 5:19, 21
- 3) All people are heading toward the wrath of God. Rom. 5:9

It is very clear that every human being is in great need of a change in his relationship with God; there is a desperate need for reconciliation.

The primary Greek word translated into English "reconciled" is the word "katallasso" (καταλλασσω). The word means to change completely. This emphatic concept of "complete change" stems from the fact that the preposition kata (κατα) is added to the verb allasso (αλλασσω). The verb allasso means to change or exchange, and the preposition kata means throughout. Hence, when the two words are combined, the concept of "complete change" or "change throughout" is easily observed.

In the realm of theology, the words "reconciliation" means to completely change from hostility to harmony. G. Abbott-Smith says it means to "change from enmity to friendship" (*Greek Lexicon*, p. 236).

Man, because he is an enemy of God and because he has sinned against God, is in a hostile relationship with God and headed toward the wrath of God. Therefore, a complete change is needed in order to make man at peace with God and bring him from his position of hostility to a position of friendship.

New Testament revelation is very careful to point out that reconciliation was one of the major accomplishments of Christ's sufferings and death (Rom. 5:10-11; II Cor. 5:18-21).

SOTERIOLOGY (51)

Such an important revelation brings us to the immediate theological conclusion that Jesus Christ is the only possible means for sinful man to be brought into a peaceful relationship with the Holy God. There is no other way that man can be reconciled to God, for Jesus Christ is the ONLY way.

A central passage of Scripture critical to the doctrine of reconciliation is II Cor. 5:18-21. In this passage it may be observed that there are two phases to reconciliation:

(Phase #1) - The positional or universal reconciliation. II Cor. 5:19

Through the death of Jesus Christ, God completely changed the position of the world and made it savable. Through Christ's work on the cross, the world has the potential of being reconciled to God. Through Christ's work on the cross, sinful people can be set free from the imputation of sin and given the imputation of righteousness, which completely changes their relationship with God from hostility to harmony.

It has been claimed by some that this verse teaches universalism, namely, that all in the world have been reconciled to God or will be reconciled to God. However, a careful reading of the passage will unfold the truth that positional reconciliation is not the same as personal reconciliation. In fact, God has commanded that we (those who are believers) take this message of reconciliation to the lost world. Obviously, if the world is universally in a peaceful relationship with God, ambassadors for Christ (v. 20) are not needed.

(Phase #2) - The personal or individual reconciliation. II Cor. 5:20

This is the personal and practical side of reconciliation in which the individual believes on Jesus Christ and is completely changed from being a condemned sinner in a hostile relationship with God, to being a justified righteous person who now is eternally at peace with God.

Universal reconciliation makes reconciliation possible, whereas personal reconciliation makes reconciliation applicable. Many will go to hell in spite of the salvation potential of universal reconciliation. No one will ever go to hell with personal application of reconciliation. The message of reconciliation is that God, through the death of Jesus Christ, has made it possible for the world, which is at enmity with Him, to be saved. The potential of being saved is in place and through faith in Christ the reality of salvation becomes personal.

One of the great theological debates concerning reconciliation is the debate of who changes in reconciliation; God or man? Another way to state the matter is who is reconciled to whom? Is God reconciled to man or is man reconciled to God?

There have been different views on this matter:

1) Some suggest God must be reconciled to sinful man and not sinful man to God. The reasoning is that since it is God's wrath that must be removed, and since God is in a hostile relationship with man because of sin, it is God who must completely change His perspective and position in regard to sinners.

SOTERIOLOGY (52)

The problem with this perspective is it attacks the immutability of God. The Bible is very clear to point out that change is not possible with God (Malachi 3:6).

2) Some suggest reconciliation is a combination of a change in God and a change in man. Dr. Berkhof believed that God was reconciled to man in Christ's death and sinful man is reconciled to God when he accepts the reconciliation. This perspective is that a complete change is needed in both God and man in order for reconciliation to occur. God changes His perspective of the world at the cross and the world changes its relationship with God by coming to the cross.

Again, the problem here is in the doctrine of immutability. God is not the one who needs to change anything about Himself; it is sinful man that needs to change.

3) Some suggest reconciliation is a complete change in man. It is man who must be reconciled to God. The reasoning here is that God is immutable, incapable of change and, biblically speaking, it is man who is completely changed to be at peace with God. Dr. Chafer says, "The Bible never asserts that God is reconciled. If it is supposed that God is represented as having changed completely His own attitude toward the world because of Christ's death, it will be remembered that it is His righteousness which is involved. Before the death of Christ, His righteousness demanded its required judgments, but after the death of Christ that same righteousness is free to save the lost" (Vol. 3, p. 92).

God does not reveal Himself to be changed. He, through the death of Christ, sees the world as changed so that it is now savable. When one believes on Christ, he is reconciled to God. What that means is that he is instantly changed from being in a hostile relationship with God to being in a harmonious relationship with God. Although God carries out these judicial matters, such as imputation of righteousness, He does so as the unchanging, immutable God. The complete change and transformation occurs in man, not God.

There are some wonderful benefits to the one who has received reconciliation:

1) We have positional and eternal peace with God. Col. 1:20-21; Rom. 5:1

Reconciliation means we are no longer an alienated, hostile enemy in our relationship with God.

2) We have eternal salvation. Rom. 5:10

Through Christ's death we are forever, fully and finally saved.

3) We have been set free from the Law. Eph. 2:14-18

The Law is no longer our condemnatory enemy. Through Christ we are free.

4) We have a harmonious relationship with God as related to Israel. Eph. 2:14-18

Through Christ's death, those of us who are non-Jewish can now have a relationship with God.

SOTERIOLOGY (53)

The barrier between Jew and Gentile is broken down through Christ.

5) We have a whole new purpose for tribulation. Rom. 5:1-5

Trials for the believer are character development agents. For the unbeliever, tribulation is designed to break him down; for the believer, tribulation is designed to build him up. One reconciled to God has a whole new dimension in his perspective of trouble and trials.

6) We have the privilege and responsibility to proclaim reconciliation. II Cor. 5:18-20

God gives us the privilege of sharing the message of reconciliation.

Accomplishment #5 - Christ's sufferings and death provide propitiation between God and man.

The word "propitiation" is the word *hilaskomai* (ἱλασκομαι), from which we get all of its derivatives, *hilasmos* (ἱλασμος) and *hilastarios* (ἱλαστηριος). The word means to appease and to conciliate—to make compatible by means of an appeasement—a satisfying or pacifying of all demands for compatibility.

There is no doubt whatsoever that propitiation is an appeasement that is needed because of our sin. That point is very clear biblically—Rom. 3:25; I John 2:2; 4:10. The difficulty of the doctrine does not lie in seeing the need for propitiation, the difficulty lies in what is it that needs propitiating. In other words, what is appeased by Christ's propitiatory work in behalf of our sin? Is it God's wrath that is satisfied or is it God's righteousness that is satisfied?

Dr. Charles Ryrie believes it is the wrath of God that needs to be appeased. He writes: "Propitiation means the turning away of wrath by an offering. In relation to soteriology, propitiation means placating or satisfying the wrath of God by the atoning sacrifice of Christ" (*Basic Theology*, p. 294).

Dr. Floyd Barackman writes: "As the Father's propitiation for our sins, He (Christ) appeased God's wrath by satisfying the demands of divine holiness and justice that were made against us and our sins" (*Practical Christian Theology*, p. 121).

Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer says, "The value to God by Christ's death as a vindication of His righteousness and law is indicated by the word propitiation" (Vol. 3, p. 93).

Dr. C. I. Scofield writes: "Propitiation, then, relates to the law and what is due God's holiness" (*Ibid.*, p. 95).

The reason for the seeming difference of opinion is because some theologians believe it is possible to appease the wrath of God and others do not believe it is possible to appease God's wrath, but it is possible to appease God's righteousness. The thinking would be Christ did not appease God's wrath but took the full brunt of God's wrath.