

pleased with the Son of His love. This is the essence of what it means to be “in Messiah.” We who are believers in Yeshua, who have been brought near by His grace, have entered into an eternal covenant, the basis of which is the eternal and infinite covenant between the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, which will bring about the “summing up all things in Messiah” (Eph 1:10). Therefore, our adoption as children into God’s family is as secure as the eternal and infinite covenant love that exists between the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.

**7–8 In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us in all wisdom and insight.**

Verse seven opens with “In Him” (or more accurately, “in Whom,” (עַן הַיְהוּא), referring to the previous title of Yeshua, “the Beloved,” the One by whom the eternal covenant of redemption between the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit secures the salvation of the elect, never to be revoked. This is reminiscent of Paul’s often used theological phrase, “in Messiah,” which encompasses all aspects of God’s saving acts toward all who would be saved. To be “in Him” is to be viewed by the Father as just as righteous as His own dear Son. “... as He is, so also are we in this world” (1Jn 4:17). Thus eternal salvation is to be found “in Messiah Yeshua,” and in Him alone. Accepting by faith that His death paid for one’s sin and that His resurrection forever proves the infinite value of His death, brings a sinner into the family of God through the regenerating work of the Ruach HaKodesh. For in overcoming death, the very penalty of sin (Rom 3:23), Yeshua has forever conquered sin and death for all who were given to Him (Jn 6:37).

Here, once again, we see the oneness of the Father, Son, and Spirit in the mystery of the Godhead and in the work of redemption. Paul begins this opening section of the epistle by affirming that it is “the God and Father of our Lord Yeshua Messiah, Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing...” (v. 3) and that the Father was the One Who chose us and predestined us to become adopted children in His family (vv 4–5). And the means by which God’s ordained plan would come to fruition is clearly stated to be “in Him,” i.e., “in Yeshua Messiah Himself.”

And there is salvation in no one else; for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved. (Acts 4:12)

*we have redemption...* – The verb “we have” (ἔχομεν, *exomen*) is in the present tense, though a few manuscripts have it in the aorist tense, “we had” (ἔσχομεν, *esxomen*).<sup>1</sup> The present tense is clearly original based upon the overwhelming agreement of manuscript evidence. The meaning is therefore clear: those who are born from above, who by faith in Yeshua have become children in the family of God, continuously possess the divine guarantee of eternal redemption and therefore live in the blessings which this surety provides. Yet we still await and long for our full redemption, when mortal will put on immortality and death will be no more. But the settled reality that our redemption is secure in Yeshua is established through the indwelling Ruach HaKodesh. In this sense, we live in the realm of “already” and “not yet.” Our redemption is sure, for we possess it now as a guarantee of our full redemption when our Lord returns and we will forever be with Him in eternity.

The word “redemption” (ἀπολύτρωσις, *apolutrōsis*) carries the sense of “deliverance as a result of the payment of a ransom.”<sup>2</sup> Some have thought the word conveys the sense of “holding to ransom” or “release on receipt of ransom” rather than “payment of ransom.”<sup>3</sup> Others have argued that the word itself does not necessarily carry the idea of “payment of a price.”<sup>4</sup> But there is significant evidence historically as well as the use of the word in the Apostolic Scriptures that it always includes the sense of “payment of a price” in order to effect the desired release. Morris<sup>5</sup> concludes that the term *apolutrōsis*, “redemption,” as used in a spiritual sense to denote redemption from the penalty of sin, can be summed up in three primary aspects:

A. *The state of sin out of which man is redeemed* – This is usually viewed as being redeemed from slavery, a condition from which the person who is enslaved cannot himself effect release. Thus, such redemption represents the intervention of an outside Person, i.e., Yeshua, Who pays the price which the one enslaved to sin cannot pay. Sometimes the Scriptures use the slavery motif directly, but even when it is

1    ⳨\*, D\*, Ψ, 104, 1505, cop, Ir<sup>lat</sup>.pt. The aorist could have been understood as ingressive, indicating the beginning of a state or condition.

2    Kistemaker, *Ephesians*, p. 82.

3    Abbott-Smith, *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* (Scribners, 1936), pp. 52-53.

4    C. H. Dodd, “Some Problems of New Testament Translation,” *BT* 13 (July, 1962), 151.

5    See Leon Morris, *The Apostolic Preaching of the Cross* (Eerdmans, 1965), pp. 11-64.

not specifically mentioned, it is nonetheless in view when redemption is the subject.

Yeshua answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is the slave of sin. (Jn 8:34)

For we know that the Torah is spiritual, but I am of flesh, sold into bondage to sin. (Rom 7:14)

As Morris notes:

It is a basic tenet of biblical theology that man is completely unable to grapple with the position created by the fact of his sin, and the redemption passages must be interpreted in this context.<sup>1</sup>

*B. The price which is paid* – Quite often it is improperly taught that “redemption” is essentially the same as “deliverance.” While it is true that deliverance is clearly the result of redemption, to equate redemption as one and the same with deliverance is to overlook an essential aspect of redemption: that it always involves the payment of a price. And such payment is a necessary component contributing to the central theme of redemption.

Moreover, that the payment is made by someone other than the one enslaved brings into view the picture of substitution. The one who pays the price to redeem the one enslaved has done so *on the behalf* of the one who is set free. This picture of substitution begins in the Torah when the laws of sacrifice are given, and the ritual of laying one’s hands upon the sacrificial animal before it is slaughtered is prescribed. This picture transfers one’s guilt upon an innocent animal which is then slaughtered as the one bearing the sin, which is surely a clear illustration of substitution.

But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being fell upon Him, and by His scourging we are healed. (Is 53:5)

and He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed. (1Pet 2:24)

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<sup>1</sup> Morris, *Ibid.*, p. 61.

*C. The resultant state of the believer* – Sometimes those who emphasize the substitutionary aspects of redemption are criticized as failing to sufficiently emphasize moral values, as though being set free from the penalty of sin is the sum and substance of redemption. But the biblical teaching of substitutionary atonement which results in the sinner being redeemed, when understood within the complete teaching of the Scriptures, also has as its ultimate goal to serve the One Who has secured one’s redemption.

Indeed, we see this in the exodus of Israel from Egypt, an event which became paradigmatic for revealing God’s eternal redemption of the elect. For the very purpose of God in redeeming Israel from the slavery of Egypt was so that Israel would serve Him: “Let My people go so that they may serve Me” (Ex 8:1, 20; 9:1, 13; 10:3).

In the Scriptures we see the price paid, the curse borne, in order that those who are redeemed should be brought into the liberty of the sons of God, a liberty which may paradoxically be called slavery to God. The whole point of this redemption is that sin no longer has dominion; the redeemed are saved to do the will of their Master.<sup>1</sup>

*...in Him we have redemption through His blood* – The meaning of redemption explained above is precisely what we see in our current text. Our redemption is “through His blood” (διὰ τοῦ αἵματος αὐτοῦ), for this expression can mean nothing else than the life of One given to redeem the life of others. This is the very foundation of atonement which effects redemption of all who are saved from the penalty of sin.

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.  
(Lev 17:11)

And according to the Torah, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and without shedding of blood there is no forgiveness. (Heb 9:22)

Note carefully that it is through His blood, that is, the blood of our perfect, eternal, and infinite Redeemer. In order to pay the price of redemption for an innumerable host of people from every nation, the

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<sup>1</sup> Morris, *Ibid.*, p. 62.

Redeemer must Himself be infinitely holy, for only a perfect sacrifice will meet the necessary payment required to satisfy the holiness of the Father. But He must also be infinite in life, for if He had but a finite life, He could offer that life only for one other person. To redeem the elect from every nation throughout all of earth's history, He must be infinite in life as well, i.e., eternal, without beginning or end.

It is clear, then, when Paul emphasizes that our redemption was gained "in His blood," he means not only that Yeshua gave Himself as a sacrifice in payment for our sin, but that the life He gave was fully sufficient to pay for the sins of all those who would be saved. Moreover, not only was the death of our Messiah sufficient to pay for the sins of all the elect, it actually did pay for their sins, for Yeshua's death is clearly taught in the Scriptures as a one-for-one substitutionary death. When Peter writes that "He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross" (1Pet 2:24), this is a clear picture of substitutionary atonement, Messiah dying in the place of the sinner, and thereby rendering full payment for the sin of each redeemed individual.

In Colossians, a "sister epistle" of Ephesians, Paul expounds on this very concept of one-for-one substitutionary atonement which pays the price of redemption for each one who is saved.

When you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions, having canceled out the certificate of debt consisting of decrees against us, which was hostile to us; and He has taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. (Col 2:13–14)

That Paul speaks of sin "nailed to the cross" clearly substantiates that the payment for sin which Yeshua procured through His death on the cross was not a potential payment but an actual one. And when this payment is applied to the sinner through the work of the Spirit by Whom he or she exercises faith in Yeshua, the Father reckons that person to have the righteousness of His own Son, Yeshua. The debt of sin against the sinner is entirely canceled, meaning he is declared "not guilty" (i.e., "justified," "declared righteous") by God Himself.

*...the forgiveness of our trespasses* – To be forgiven by God means that the sin which was reckoned to the sinner and thus required payment, has been paid in full and is thereby stricken from the ledger.

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. (Ps 103:12)

The word “trespass” (*παραπτώμα, paraptōma*) carries the idea of “falling to the side of a given norm or path.” The word therefore became a fitting description of moral or ethical norms which were violated or disregarded. Clearly from a biblical perspective, the “norm” is that which is revealed by God and is in harmony with His own holiness. Thus He commands Israel, “Be holy, for I am holy” (Lev 11:44).

Paul does not teach us here that the forgiveness which God gives us when we come to faith is for just some of our trespasses. Rather, when he writes that we have been forgiven “of our trespasses,” he clearly means all of them. Some might conclude that having all of one’s sins removed from the heavenly “record book” means that a person would no longer have any motivation to live righteously. Paul deals with this in his epistle to the Romans and teaches us there that the very love of God by which our sins are forgiven in Yeshua has also created within us a new heart or way of thinking—a new view of life and what constitutes our highest goals and values. Through the indwelling Spirit, we have been made new and therefore have both a desire and a growing ability to serve the Lord in accordance with that which pleases Him.

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin so that grace may increase? May it never be! How shall we who died to sin still live in it? Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Messiah Yeshua have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Messiah was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:1–4)

...*according to the riches of His grace* – This phrase describes the supreme cost of our Messiah’s sacrifice for sinners. It is true that God’s grace is the fountain from which His love flows to the elect through the giving of His Son to be their Savior. Yet here Paul does not write “out of the riches of His grace” but “according to the riches of His grace.” The preposition translated “according to” (*κατά, kata*) carries the sense of “in proportion to.” This means that the value of Yeshua’s death is equal to the wealth of God’s grace. This is all the more emphasized by the addition of the word “riches” (*πλοῦτος, ploutos*), which has the sense of “full, filled” and thus emphasizes the infinite “abundance, riches, or wealth” of God’s love and grace.

It took the wealth of God's grace to redeem and forgive the sinner. The cost of sin was the supreme sacrifice of God's Son Jesus Christ.<sup>1</sup>

...which He lavished on us in all wisdom and insight. – Here Paul continues to extol the overflowing abundance of God's grace in saving sinners. The forgiveness of sins has become a reality for all who are in Messiah, not because of what they have done, but purely as a result of God's sovereign and abundant grace.

The word translated by the NASB as "lavished" is *περισεύω* (*perisseuō*) and is a favorite of Paul, used 26 times in his epistles. It carries the basic sense of an "overabundance" and when coupled with the previous description of the "riches" of God's grace, "the overwhelming abundance of God's grace is clearly demonstrated."<sup>2</sup> Here we have the opportunity to ponder once again what we value the most in our lives. When we consider that all we have that is good comes from the grace of God, we know that our life in Him, in Messiah, is the greatest treasure we possess.

The final phrase, "in all wisdom and insight" is sometimes put with v. 8 and sometimes with v. 9 in the English translations. Note that in the NASB, a period is put after "us" and the word "In" is capitalized to show that it begins a new sentence with v. 9.<sup>3</sup> Those who take the phrase to connect with v. 9 do so by suggesting that it describes the manner in which God made known the mystery of His will, i.e., "with all wisdom and insight." Those who take it with v. 8 see the phrase as describing the result of God's abundant grace, for He gives to His children wisdom and insight in order to serve Him as He pleases. Some would consider that since Paul includes the word "all" in the phrase, that this simply cannot be describing wisdom and insight given to people. But the word "all" in the Greek, *πάση* (*pasē*), is without the article (i.e., anarthrous), and this usage can often denote "every kind of" or "all sorts of." What supports taking the phrase to describe God's gift of wisdom and insight which He gives to those He saves, is that this thought is repeated twice in the following context of this chapter. In v. 9 Paul teaches us that believers have been given wisdom to discern the mysteries of God's will. Likewise, in v. 17 Paul prays that believers might be given wisdom and revelation. Further, we may note a clear parallel thought

1 Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 209.

2 Hoehner, *Ephesians*, p. 210.

3 In the pages above, I've modified the NASB by keeping the phrase "in all wisdom and insight" with v. 8.

in Col 1:9, in which a similar phrase, “wisdom and understanding,” is Paul’s prayer for the believers to whom he writes:

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding (σοφία καὶ συνέσει)... (Col 1:9)

Given these parallels, it seems best to understand the phrase to describe “wisdom and insight” as divinely given to those He redeems in order to enable them to grow in sanctification as they seek God and live in the strength of His abundant grace.