

## Other Words and Pictures Associated with Salvation

The first three sessions in this series have dealt with the doctrines of salvation and atonement (or reconciliation). There are other words and pictures which the New Testament uses to shed light on these actions of God in saving us and reconciling us to Him or with which the Old Testament foreshadows Jesus' actions in bringing these about. This session will give a brief summary of the major examples.

### Old Testament Examples

Right at the start of humankind's existence, there are a number of examples of **sacrifices for sin**. These include the killing of at least one animal to provide skins for Adam and Eve to use as coverings(Gen3:21); the acceptable sacrifice made by Abel(Gen4:4); Noah's sacrifice immediately after the flood has subsided(Gen8:20); sacrifices by Abraham(Gen15:9-17 & Gen22), Isaac (Gen26:25\*), and Jacob(Gen31:54 & 35:2-5\*). In the final example, no sacrifice is explicitly recorded, but the building of an altar implies that sacrifice was made.

In Exodus, Moses initially asks Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to leave Egypt in order to hold a festival and to ***“offer sacrifices to the Lord our God”*** (Ex5:3; 8:25-29 & 10:25-26). Later, the **Passover** is established as a vital festival for the children of Israel (Ex12). It is worth reading this whole chapter through and jotting down as bullet points the instructions and meanings of the Passover; some are

- a lamb was to be sacrificed (v3)
- the lamb must be a male without defect (v5)
- the blood must be sprinkled on the doorframes where the lamb is eaten (v7)
- the Israelites must stay inside the house until morning (v22)
- the feast is to be a continuing ordinance (v14)

***“When the Lord goes through the land to strike down the Egyptians, he will see the blood on the top and sides of the doorframe and will pass over that doorway, and he will not permit the destroyer to enter your houses and strike you down.”***

***Ex12:23***

In the New Testament, Passover is given a whole new meaning. Luke 22:15-23 gives a straightforward explanation from Jesus himself of the way in which the feast would be “fulfilled” (v15). He gives new and eternal meaning to the symbols of the feast, the bread (his body) and the wine (his blood). The shadows in the Old Testament give way to reality in the New; the temporary symbols give way to eternal truths. The lamb and its blood foreshadowed the body and blood of the Lord Jesus,

***“For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed.”***

***1Cor5:7***

Paschal Lamb by God appointed,  
All our sins on thee were laid:  
By almighty love anointed,  
Thou hast full atonement made.

John Bakewell

The word “Paschal” derives from the Hebrew “*Pescha*” which is translated as passover in the Old Testament.

The Passover was followed fairly swiftly by the **exodus**, the departure from Egypt and deliverance from Pharaoh's threat by the crossing of the Red Sea (Ex14). The exodus is often put forward as a “type” or representation of salvation. (In this regard, the crossing of the Jordan is also held by some to represent salvation, by others to represent entry to heaven following life in the wilderness. The exodus, especially the crossing of the Red Sea, is used as a picture in 1Cor10 to illustrate the need to resist temptation and to follow God wholeheartedly in the christian life. Paul compares the crossing of the Red Sea to baptism in 1Corinthians10:2

The previous session dealt at some length with the **Day of Atonement**, Yom Kippur (Lev16) and with how that feast also pointed to Jesus as its fulfilment (Heb9&10). So Jesus is the eternally effective lamb of God.

*“Look the lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!”*  
*Jn1:29*

One of the best known passages of the Old Testament is Isaiah 53. In this chapter the picture of the **suffering servant** is portrayed to great effect. The picture is taken up in the New Testament by Philip when he finds the Ethiopian reading this passage and shows how it applies to Jesus (Ac8:32-35). Peter also makes use of the passage when reminding slaves that they should be righteous and so follow Jesus' example (2Pet2:22-25). The passage acknowledges the free will decision to accept and follow God's will (as decided by the Godhead as a whole). It also portrays graphically the death of Jesus on the cross and the basis for the theory of penal substitution (see session 3).

Suffering servant, scorned, ill-treated, victim crucified;  
Death is through the cross defeated, sinners justified.  
Yours the glory and the crown, the high renown, the eternal name.

Michael Saward

Sacrifices, Passover, the exodus, the Day of Atonement and the suffering servant all look forward to the life and death of Jesus and to our salvation through his blood. So we now turn to the New Testament and the major salvation terms there.

## New Testament Words and Pictures

**Reconciliation** is the commonest way in which peace with God is set out. This topic was dealt with in session 3, so only a brief recap is given here. It is always people who are reconciled to God, God cannot be reconciled to sinful people. It is we who have sinned and put ourselves at enmity with God. It is our lives and our nature which need to be changed, not God's. This reconciliation was brought about by Jesus' death and is offered by the grace of God, through the faith He provides as a gift.

Hark the herald angels sing,  
“Glory to the newborn King  
Peace on Earth and mercy mild  
God and sinners reconciled.”

Charles Wesley

**Redemption** or **ransom** - buying back or buying freedom is employed as a metaphor for our salvation in several passages. Ransom is used in Matt20:28 and Mark10:45

***“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many”***  
***Mk10:45***

Peter emphasises both the special nature of the ransom paid for us and the eternal nature of the freedom that it bought and links the Old Testament idea of sacrifice with the redemption effected by Jesus. Ransoms in the physical world, such as might be paid for the return of defeated princes, might be paid with the costliest physical things, but spiritual ransom cannot be bought by physical riches. Our spiritual ransom could only be paid by Jesus' death, by the free gift of his life.

***“For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.”***  
***1Pet1:18,19***

Paul uses the same word, ransom, in 1Tim2:6, but with a significant difference in grammar which alters the meaning slightly. In the gospel references the word is followed by “instead of many” which indicates that his life is paid as a ransom for those who accept that his sacrifice was on their behalf and that by it they are delivered from death. In 1Timothy Paul says the substitutionary ransom is made “on behalf” of all which shows the sacrifice was provisionally universal, whilst maintaining the need for its acceptance (by grace through faith) by the individual in order for it to become personally applicable. (For a discussion of the Greek, see Vine's Expository Dictionary of Bible Words under ransom.)

The idea of freedom from enemies by means of a ransom is the first thought in the prophecy of Zechariah after the birth of his son, John the Baptist; though notice that he does not suggest the John is the instrument of this redemption (Jn1:68). The same hope is expressed by the prophet Anna when Jesus is presented in the Temple. This time the idea of redemption is explicitly linked to Jesus. (Jn2:38). Now the redemption that these two spoke of might seem to be applicable only to Israel. The the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke24:21) had in mind the freeing of Israel and even in the words of Jesus the redemption could come across as applicable to Jewish believers only (Luke21:28). In Paul's letters, he makes it clear that Jesus has effected a redemption of believers from all nations and John also writes of this in Revelation.

***“There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus”***

***Rom3:23,24***

***“You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals because you were slain, and with your blood purchased for God men from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God and they will reign on the earth.”***

***Rev5:9,10***

So we are redeemed or ransomed by the blood of Jesus shed for us at Calvary. We should ask what we are bought from and what we are bought into. An early attempt at forming a theory of atonement taught that Jesus' life was a price paid to Satan to buy humankind out of his power. To many protestant thinkers the idea that Satan deserves or can demand any payment from God is unthinkable, nor can they agree with the suggestion that Jesus' death was a trick played on Satan because when he claimed the life of Jesus he over-reached his authority and therefore lost it all. Reformation protestants rejected these ideas, instead developing the penal substitution theory set out in session 3.

Before the death of Jesus, the Jews considered that there were two sets of people, the Jews themselves who had the law and the Gentiles who did not.

***“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us .... He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”***

***Gal3:13,14***

***“But when the set time had fully come, God sent his son ... to redeem those under the law, that that we might receive adoption to sonship\*. Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.”***

***Gal4:4-6***

So Paul is teaching that both Jews and Gentiles are redeemed from the penalty required by the Law. As a result both are adopted into God's family. As a seal, a guarantee, of this redemption the Holy Spirit was given to believers.

***“When you believed you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession – to the praise of his glory.”***

***Eph1:14 (Eph4:30)***

Because we have been redeemed, we are no longer enslaved in darkness, but free in the kingdom of light. It is this new citizenship and relationship which is evidenced by the presence of the Holy Spirit. It is this presence which assures us of the eternal nature of this redemption and of the future completion of the work.

***“For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.”***

***Col1:14***

There is a consistency throughout scripture which reminds us of the grace, love and constancy of God. Whether we look at the Old Testament or the New, it is God who takes the initiative in offering salvation – whatever picture you are thinking of. Old Testament “types”, atonement, reconciliation, redemption, all take place by the plan and the grace of God. All are accomplished by the power of God. Most, if not all, require the willing suffering of Jesus. The whole set of processes should lead us to give God glory by word (in prayer, song, worship) and in deed (submission, obedience, worship). All the Godhead is involved in these actions and processes, Father, Son and Holy Spirit all plan and carry out their parts in our reconciliation, redemption, adoption, life. Together they are to be thanked and worshipped, although perhaps it is easier and more obvious to be thankful to Jesus as the one who paid the price.

There's a sweet and blessed story  
Of the Christ who came from glory,  
Just to rescue me from sin and misery;  
He in loving-kindness sought me,  
And from sin and shame hath brought me,  
Hallelujah! Jesus ransomed me.