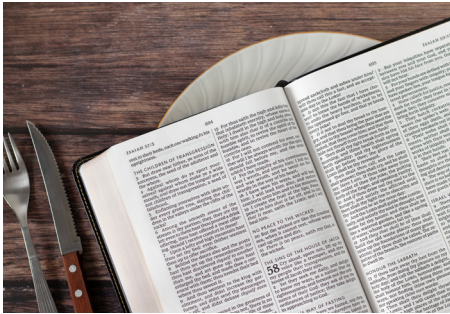


Daily Special: Redemption Through His Blood

By Steve Burchett



A single individual's salvation is part of a much bigger story about God's activity in eternity past to save sinners. Paul wrote, "He chose us in him before the foundation of the world" (Eph 1:4a). A believer can say, "God knew me and chose me freely and unconditionally before he ever created anything — before Genesis 1:1! If he had not done that, I would perish in hell forever."

However, God's election of individuals to save was not enough to deliver anyone. Paul

intentionally mentions that God "chose us *in him*" — in Christ. God not only predetermined the salvation of those he chose, but he also ordained the means of their salvation, namely, the ministry of Christ on earth: "In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us" (Eph 1:7-8a). Let's consider Christ's saving work as explained in those verses, one big idea at a time.

"redemption through his blood"

The word "redemption" refers to being set free by the payment of a price. The roots of this concept are seen in God delivering Israel from slavery to the Egyptians (the exodus), but people in Ephesus would have understood this concept because slavery was prevalent in their culture. They knew that slaves could be redeemed — purchased out of bondage into freedom.

If God was going to save us and adopt us into his family as he "predestined" (v. 5), we were going to have to be redeemed out of bondage to sin. Paul uses a word for sin in verse 7, "trespasses," which speaks of going beyond God's boundaries. I have a dog that enjoys trespassing every time I let her off her leash outside in the front of my house. Every human is born with that propensity and goes beyond God's wise boundaries for their lives. We are automatically born into the slave market of sin and are unable to free ourselves. Left there in our sin, we live under the wrath of God and await an eternal hell.

How can we be delivered from the grip sin has on our lives and the consequences our trespasses deserve? We need a payment that is beyond our ability ever to make. I grew up about 50 minutes from Muirfield Village Golf Club, famous for a golf tournament every year hosted by perhaps the greatest golfer ever, Jack Nicklaus. Surrounding the golf course are neighborhoods with massive, immaculate homes. I remember when, as a boy, my parents would sometimes drive us around those streets for fun, and I would think to myself, "I'll never be able to afford a house like these!" But that's not necessarily true. There were avenues in life I could have taken that might have eventually

set me up to afford a house like that. Yet, I could never in a million lifetimes come up with the proper payment to pay what it would cost to be set free from my sin. Somebody else had to pay the price, and someone did!

Who?

Paul mentions "redemption through *his blood*." God gave his son, who came into the world to pay the price to redeem us from sin. The price paid was "his blood," meaning Jesus gave his life on the cross for sinners. Peter speaks of being "ransomed . . . not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ" (1 Peter 1:18-19). Jesus took his people's sins on himself on the cross and bore their punishment; he paid the ransom with his life to set sinners free.

"The forgiveness of our trespasses"

Associated with "redemption" is the idea of "forgiveness," which speaks of Jesus releasing those who believe in him from the punishment that their sins deserve. One pastor, quoting a professor friend of his, said, "Hell is eternity in the presence of God. Heaven is eternity in the presence of God with a mediator" (Lig Duncan, quoting Professor Finlayson). God's presence will be there in hell — but only his furious wrath! However, for believers in Christ, their trespasses are forgiven. They forever have an advocate who died and rose again to set them free from sin and deliver them from God's wrath and into his family forever.

If you are a Christian, God has not overlooked your sin, but he has dealt with it in the most incredible, loving, undeserving way! You are forgiven. But there is a third critical idea to consider.

"according to the riches of his grace, which he lavished upon us"

Redemption and the forgiveness of sins are our experience because of God's grace that has been extravagantly, undeservedly given to us. His love and kindness toward sinners in redeeming them is so abundant that the supply experienced first at conversion will never run out.

There is a restaurant about 35 minutes from my home that offers a daily special. Their advertisements are very enticing! Sometimes, though, they run out of their special. If you are reluctant to go to Jesus to save you or to hold you fast because you wonder if God might run out of his special, or you think you are too much of a sinner to be redeemed, you are mistaken. Charles Spurgeon was right when he said, "You cannot sin as much as God can forgive" ("The Exceeding Riches of Grace," TMTP 28, no 1665, 343).

Response

In Ephesians 1, Paul moved from writing about the electing love of the Father *before* history to the redeeming work of Christ *in* history. The first act required the next. And what are we to do with this information? First, look to Jesus to redeem you and forgive you of your sins. This "daily special" is still available! And then join Paul in blessing God for these spiritual blessings that are ours in Christ.

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