

1 Peter 1:17-19 – Part JJ

1Pe 1:17 (NKJV) And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one's work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay *here* in fear; ¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, *like* silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.

The theological word that is generally used to describe the work of God in the work of redemption and salvation is the word “atonement” which is not actually a Bible term. Almost every religion in the world has some form of the idea of atonement in their belief system. Even if it is not clearly stated, every religion understands that there is right and wrong, and that when someone does something that is wrong that there has to be some kind of recompense and restitution made for that offense. The Bible calls the offense as “**sin**”, but other religions generally do not use that biblical term. So, in every religion outside of Christianity, the individual is responsible to somehow make their own personal restitution to their deity or deities that will somehow effectively compensate for or actually remove their wrong doings. It could be a payment of money, doing good works of some nature, performing some kind of religious ritual, offering some actual living sacrifice, or even different forms of self-abasement.¹ This is normal for all religions that have ever existed. However, this is the complete opposite of what is demanded by Christianity. Christianity clearly delineates that there is nothing that an individual can actually do to make compensation for their sins, so God has chosen to provide the restitution necessary for salvation. The individual is simply a recipient of His goodness and forgiveness. So, in Christianity the sinner makes no contribution whatsoever to the salvation process. I love what John MacArthur has said about this when he wrote,

“The divide between the sinner’s depravity and God’s unapproachable holiness is so vast, the sinner, even with his noblest efforts, has no hope of ever standing in a right relationship with a holy God. The only hope for salvation comes – as it must – from outside the sinner. It is found in God’s own provision of full and free atonement for sin. That glorious provision satisfies justice and releases the grace of forgiveness.”²

At a kind of high level, “**redemption**” refers specifically to the idea of someone being delivered from a particular kind of bondage on the basis of the payment of a ransom. “**Redemption**” is the word that describes the actual means by which salvation is achieved, and in the New Testament it is strictly a work of God that is accomplished by the death of Jesus Christ.³ Here is what we must realize. Every lost person is in bondage to two distinct things – sin and Satan, and they need someone that can actually “redeem” them from that bondage.⁴ [1 John 5:19](#) declares that the whole world is in bondage to the devil,

1Jn 5:19 (NKJV) We know that we are of God, and the whole world lies *under the sway* of the wicked one.

1Jn 5:19 (ESV) We know that we are from God, and the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.

[Colossians 1:13](#) says the following about God,

Col 1:13 (NKJV) **He has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love,**

Generally it is understood that there are four primary words that are used to describe salvation. Each of the four words has a distinct side and meaning to it that is different from the other three words. The first word is “**atonement**”. What the atoning work of Christ does is remove the guilt and penalty that sin incurs in a person’s life. The second word is “**propitiation**” which simply means that when Christ died for our sins that God was completely satisfied with His sacrifice. Nothing else was needed for salvation. What propitiation provided was the actual removal of God’s wrath incurred in a person’s life by their sin. God is going to judge sin, but by accepting Christ’s sacrifice for someone else, God has removed His wrath from their life. The third word is “**reconciliation**”. We once were enemies of God, but because of Christ we now become an actual part of God’s family. So what is removed is the alienation and enmity with God. We are no longer enemies. The fourth word is the one we are studying called “**redemption**”. What redemption does is to deliver us from the bondage of sin and the bondage of the law.⁵ These are all great Bible words that interwoven into each other and each has great meaning.

The word “**redemption**” is used 11 times in the New Testament, and the word “**redeemed**” or a form of the word is used another 11 times. [Ephesians 1:7](#) reiterates that the means of redemption is the actual physical “**blood**” of Christ.

Eph 1:7 (NKJV) **In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace**

Now, as we enter into the exposition of our verse, it will be a little technical, so I want you to just bear with me for a little bit. I will not be trying to put you to sleep, so just hang in there for a few moments. All that I am trying to do is to make some grammatical distinctions that immensely impact our understanding of several verses related to the idea of being “**redeemed**”. In fact, a lack of understanding of some of these distinctions has become the basis for the development of various false doctrines. I remind you once again that the idea of salvation, or in the case of [1 Peter 1:18](#) of redemption, is the most misunderstood and most attacked doctrine in the Scriptures. The enemy will use every strategy possible to undermine and distort our understanding of genuine life-transforming salvation.

The verb “**redeemed**” is the Greek word “*lytroo*” and simply means to ransom someone, to pay a ransom so that an individual may be released from bondage. There are two specific Greek words translated to express this idea. The first is the Greek word “*exagorazō*”. It does not signify the actual redemption, but rather the **price** paid for the redemption. However, the Greek word “*lytroo*” used in [1 Peter 1:18](#) signifies the actual deliverance, the actual being set at liberty.⁶ Now, this particular verb “*lytroo*” is only used three times in the New Testament and in each case the redemptive activity is being performed either by God the Father or by Christ the Son. In this context, it obviously is speaking directly of the work of Christ. [Mark 10:45](#) speaking of the same idea says it this way,

Mk 10:45 (NKJV) **For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”**

The word for “**ransom**” in this verse is “*lytron*” and is the noun form of the verb “*lytroo*”. So in this verse Mark tells us that the actual redemption price that was paid was “**His life**”, or the very life of Christ

Himself, and that it was “**for many**”. In this verse in Mark, the phrase “**for many**” uses the preposition “*anti*” (“**for**”) which means that it only holds good for those who accept it or receive it.⁷ The term “*anti*” (“**for**”) means “in place of”. In other words, Christ does for the sinner what they cannot do for themselves.⁸ [1 Timothy 2:6](#), a very similar verse, says,

1Ti 2:6 (NKJV) who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

Notice in this verse, however, that it uses the same English words, but says “**for all**” rather than “**for many**”. Now, we have to appreciate that there is a great, great difference between “**all**” and “**many**”. In this verse the phrase “**a ransom**” which in English is translated the same as [Mark 10:45](#), is not the same word “*lytron*” as in [Mark 10:45](#), but is the word “*antilutron*” and is followed by the preposition “*hyper*” which means “**on behalf of**”. What the preposition “*hyper*” means is that the undeserved death that Jesus suffered was a substitute suffering for those who were condemned to both sin and death.

Now, there is a very important distinction to see – how the same English words “**a ransom for**” are translated in the actual Greek text. In [Mark 10:45](#) the Greek reads “*lutron anti*”, but the same words in [1 Timothy 2:6](#) read “*antilutron hyper*”.

Mk 10:45 (NKJV) For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for (*lutron anti*) many."

1Ti 2:6 (NKJV) who gave Himself a ransom for (*antilutron hyper*) all, to be testified in due time,

In English the phrases literally appear to be the same to us, but in the Greek language they are significantly different. The ransom that is mentioned in [1 Timothy 2:6](#) was paid “**on behalf of**” everyone – the use of the word “**all**”. It was a universal sacrifice, a universal ransom that was sufficient to pay for everyone’s sins. No one is excluded. No matter who someone is and no matter what they may have done, the sacrifice of Christ on their behalf is more than sufficient to completely pay for their sins. The sacrifice is and always will remain sufficient “**for all**”. However, in [Mark 10:45](#), the phrase that is used is “**for many**”, and that simply means that the sacrifice is only “actual” for those who accept God’s conditions of salvation – and no one else.⁹ Theologically, we say it this way. The sacrifice of Christ is “SUFFICIENT” to pay for the sins of the whole world ([1 Timothy 2:6](#)), but it is only “EFFICIENT” for those who actually receive Christ and His sacrifice ([Mark 10:45](#)). The reason that I mention all of this is because there are many people who use the words “**for all**” to mean that everyone will be saved. It is called “universalism” and often times is embraced by people who simply cannot accept the idea of an eternal judgment in the Lake of Fire mentioned in Revelation. However, the simple problem is that we cannot just take one or two verses in isolation and make a doctrine out of it – which is what many have done. The whole counsel of God clearly teaches that even though the death of Christ is more than adequate to pay for the sins of the whole world that it is only appropriated and provided to those who actually receive the work of Christ on God’s terms of faith and repentance. So, here is what Scripture clearly teaches. It teaches that Jesus Christ sacrificially gave up His life under God’s judgment on sin “**for all**”, and in so doing He paid the price necessary to deliver men who receive Him (“**for many**”) from the penalty that was to be incurred because of their sin against God. [Hebrews 9:26](#) says,

Heb 9:26 (NKJV) **He then would have had to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

The death of Christ was the means by which a believer is not only set free from the guilt that sin creates in their life, but also from the consequences of sin which are death and judgment.¹⁰

At this point it is important to take a moment and make a distinction relative to the word “guilt” and its impact on either a believer or a non-believer. I do not in any way want to minimize the impact and effect of sin on a believer’s life because it can be significant. However, we must realize that as believers that we have all been forgiven of any and every sin that we have committed or will commit. [Romans 8:1](#) reiterates this precious truth this way when it says,

Ro 8:1 (NKJV) ***There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.***

When a believer sins against God, what is impacted is not their relationship with God, but their actual fellowship with Him. If we sin against God, we certainly may lose specific rewards for faithfulness, but we do not lose our salvation. We also may certainly experience a level of guilt for having sinned against Christ, but that does not change the fact that we are completely and eternally forgiven for our sins. When I knowingly sin against God, it actually hurts me in an emotional way. I feel a deep sense of remorse, of regret, and even shame. However, how I “feel” and how the enemy may make me feel when I sin does not change the fact that there is “**no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus**”. I have to literally push and force myself into God’s forgiveness. I am sure that we have all felt or thought “*how can God love me after what I have done*”. Well, He loves us and forgives us not because of anything that we may do, but solely on the basis of the redeeming work of Christ on our behalf. As a believer, one of the most strategic lessons that we have to learn is that of accepting God’s forgiveness for our sins and failures. We have to learn that lesson.

For the unbeliever, however, things are very different because guilt is very real emotion designed by God to lead them to an awareness of their sin against Him and ultimately to repentance. God is very patient with the lost person. [Romans 2:4](#) says,

Ro 2:4 (NKJV) **Or do you despise the riches of His goodness, forbearance, and longsuffering, not knowing that the goodness of God leads you to repentance?**

[Titus 1:15](#) says of the unbeliever,

Tit 1:15 (NKJV) **To the pure all things are pure, but to those who are defiled and unbelieving nothing is pure; but even their mind and conscience are defiled.**

The more that a lost person rejects God’s truth, the more their mind and their conscience will become “**defiled**”. It means to become polluted, contaminated, and corrupted to a point that they may reach a place in their life where they literally cannot hear or respond to God. [Ephesians 4:17-18](#) describes some of it this way,

Eph 4:17 (NKJV) **This I say, therefore, and testify in the Lord, that you should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind,¹⁸ having their understanding darkened,**

being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;

No one knows where that point of no return is, but certainly it may happen in someone's life where they become so defiled and polluted by sin and unbelief that they simply have no desire or yearning to respond to God's mercy and love. I cannot quantify where that may be in a person's life, but certainly there are many examples of this scenario with which we are all very familiar.

ENDNOTES

¹ MacArthur, 511-512.

² MacArthur, 512.

³ Campbell, 290-291.

⁴ Grudem, 580.

⁵ MacArthur, 533.

⁶ Vine, 935.

⁷ Vine, 919.

⁸ Kittel, 545

⁹ Vine, 919-920.

¹⁰ Verbrugge, 345.

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