

A vertical photograph of a waterfall in a dense, lush green forest. The water flows from the top left, down a rocky path, and continues as a single stream towards the bottom right. The surrounding vegetation is thick with various shades of green, including ferns and broad-leafed plants. The text is overlaid in a bold, yellow, serif font.

REDEMPTION AND SALVATION

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A Place in the Wilderness

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Scripture quotations are from the
American Standard Version of the Bible (1901)
unless otherwise noted.



The terms redemption and salvation are often used interchangeably and assumed to have the same meaning in the Bible. We frequently hear a believer ask whether someone is saved. What is really being asked is whether one has been redeemed by the blood of Christ. But in the Bible, redemption and salvation are markedly different.

Redemption

To redeem is to buy something back. We all have been sold under sin.¹ Apart from Christ and what He has done, we are owned by the evil one through sin. By sinning, we have sold ourselves to the devil. Since all men have sinned,² all have been sold. We need to be redeemed, to be bought back.

There is only one way for us to be redeemed, and there is only one price that can be paid to buy us back. That price is the death of an innocent man—a man who

¹ Rom. 7:14

² Rom. 3:23

has no sin and over whom death has no authority. The man Jesus was such a man. He was in every way sinless and innocent. Satan had no ground in Him, and death had no authority over Him. But, Jesus gave up His life willingly as the price to redeem all men.¹ The blood of this one innocent man vastly outweighed the debt from sin of the whole human race. By His death on the cross, Christ paid the price for us all to be redeemed back to God.²

Once we were far from God, but by Christ's death on the cross, we have been brought near to God. How marvelous redemption is! How wonderful to be near God!

Salvation

Salvation, on the other hand, refers to a preservation or rescue from damage, injury, loss, or danger. We may have been redeemed back to God from our position of being sold under sin. However, we still may have many problems. For example, we may need to be delivered from worldliness, the flesh, or being earthly or natural.

We may have been redeemed from our sins and the debt incurred from them, yet inwardly the effects of

¹ 1 Pet. 1:18–19

² Col. 1:14

our sins and the sinful nature within remains. The inward sinful nature may still be causing damage to our soul.

We may still love the world, even though the whole world lies in the evil one.¹ Perhaps we do not love the entire world, but how about some portion of it—religion, sports, education, amusements, or one of the other numerous aspects of the world? It seems that for every human heart, there is some part of the world that attracts it and draws it away from God.

Even though we have been redeemed, sin in our flesh may still be very active. Lusts and desires of various kinds may rampage through our flesh, entangling and ensnaring us. We may be redeemed, but what about our fleshliness? For example, consider the incestuous brother in Corinth.² He was certainly redeemed; nevertheless, he was living a fleshly life.

What about our naturalness? Or, our earthliness? We may be redeemed, yet our being may remain common, something of the Earth, something natural. You may ask, what is wrong with being natural? Even before the fall, Adam in his natural, created state was lacking. He was not a heavenly being or a godly one. He was of the Earth and bound to the Earth.

¹ 1 John 5:19

² 1 Cor. 5:1, 5

We must be delivered from all these problems and deficiencies. We must not only be bought back from sin, but rescued from all things. God's salvation delivers us from everything to Himself. It uplifts our state of being. It delivers us from what we once were—a fallen, fleshy, worldly, earthly, and natural being—to what God Himself is. How great is God's salvation! Not only does it deliver us from everything negative, but lifts us to the highest possible standard—God Himself.

Law and Life

Redemption is something outward and objective. It is a legal matter relating to judgment. Imagine yourself in a courtroom, having been sued for non-payment of a considerable debt. Imagine further that God sits as the Judge of your case. He is absolutely righteous, having no bias whatsoever. He cannot excuse or exonerate you because your immense debt remains unpaid. You have nothing with which to pay off your debt, and you have no hope of ever procuring sufficient funds for repayment. As God is pronouncing His judgment—in our case, the judgment is death—a third Party enters the courtroom and hands the Judge all that is required to cancel your debt. With your debt having been repaid, God has no choice but to free you. To do otherwise would be unrighteous. This is redemption.

However, although you have been freed, you are in a terrible physical state. You are greatly malnourished and starving. You are suffering from various diseases and other afflictions. Due to your woeful state, it is difficult for you to even move. You consider that death, which would seem to be the eventual outcome of your deteriorating condition, might actually be better than living as you are. As you struggle to leave the courtroom, the Judge sees your pitiful condition and is moved with compassion. He puts aside His robe and comes to you, bringing with Him food and medication. As you receive what the Judge offers, you are slowly strengthened and healed. This is salvation. Salvation is inward, having to do with life. It is an uplifting of our human condition not only from the fall but also from our original state as God-created beings. It is an upraising of us to the highest standard—what God is.

Blood and Water

As Christ hung on the cross, a soldier pierced His side.¹ From that wound, blood and water flowed. This signifies a spiritual reality that was unseen by human eyes. Christ's blood represents His humanity, which was poured out to buy us back from sin. This is redemption. It is by Christ's sacrificed and outpoured

¹ John 19:34

humanity—by the shedding of His blood—that we are redeemed.

The water from Christ's side symbolizes the divine life within Him—His divinity—being outpoured to man. It is by His divine life that we are saved. God's salvation is by Christ's outpoured divinity.

The blood and water flowing from Christ's side symbolize His humanity and divinity being outpoured. His humanity and divinity outpoured are redemption and salvation to us.

While a soldier did pierce the side of Christ's physical body, that too was a picture—a picture of something spiritual that had already occurred. Who really pierced Christ? Yes, a soldier pierced Him physically, but that was a picture of something far more profound. It was the Father who pierced Christ. The Father pierced His own Son on our behalf, that both Christ's humanity and divinity would be released and outflowed to us to meet our need. His humanity outpoured meets our great need of being brought back to God. His divinity outpoured meets our even greater need of being inwardly saved from so many things and uplifted to the divine state.

Recall the story of Abraham offering Isaac.¹ How great was Abraham's love for his son? Yet, he was willing to offer him. And Isaac was willing to be bound

¹ Gen. 22:9–10

and sacrificed. This is a picture of what occurred spiritually as Christ was crucified. The Father pierced His own Son! How great the love He must have for us that He would do such a thing. And the Son willingly submitted to the Father's piercing. How great a love does the Son have for His Father and for us that He would so willingly submit.

Complementary

While redemption and salvation are not identical, they are complementary. Redemption is for salvation, and salvation requires redemption. Redemption opens the door for us to experience salvation. Salvation is possible due to redemption.

Immediately after Adam and Eve fell in the garden of Eden, God closed the way to the tree of life by placing Cherubim with flame and sword to keep the way.¹ Similarly, in both the Tabernacle and the Temple, between the Holy Place and the Holy of Holies there was a veil. No one could enter that Holy of Holies—that place where God dwelt—except the high priest once a year,² and then only with the blood of the sacrifice. The

¹ Gen. 3:24

² Heb. 9:7

way to God as the divine life was blocked.¹ But on the cross at the time of Christ's death, the veil in the Temple was rent from top to bottom.² This signified Christ's death had opened the way to God—God Himself was tearing away the veil that separated man from Him.

God created man for Himself, that He and we might enjoy the closest of relationships. Yet, for millennia, that relationship has been frustrated by sin—the righteous God could not receive fallen man or excuse his sin. When that frustration was removed by Christ's death, God immediately and with great joy ripped away the veil separating us from Him.

Christ's death on the cross with the outpouring of His humanity and His divinity has solved all of man's problems before God. It has cleared away the obstruction brought about by sin and opened the way to God's throne. To us, that throne is the throne of grace.³ From that throne, God flows Himself out as life to be everything in us and to us. He meets our every need, and by His life slowly changes us from who and what we once were into who and what He is. But, at the same time, He is maintaining our existence in some mysterious and inexplicable way.

¹ Heb. 9:8

² Matt. 27:51

³ Heb. 4:16

By such a process, indwelling sin, the self, worldliness, the natural man, earthliness, and everything not of God is eliminated. Furthermore, everything God is—the divine life, the divine nature, the divine glory with all of His divine attributes and Christ's human virtues—is imparted into us. By God's redemption and His salvation, He brings us from the lowest state—that of a sinful, fallen human being—to the highest possible state, making us the same as He is and sharing with us His own position.

Cooperation

What can we do? It seems God has done everything on our behalf. In one sense, this is true. However, God requires our cooperation. If we do not cooperate, all of what Christ has accomplished in His life, death, resurrection, and ascension remains outside and apart from us. It is through our cooperation with the indwelling divine life that God imparts all of who and what He is to us. It is through this that we become partakers of all that God has done for us.

Enjoy God's redemption! Cooperate and participate in His salvation by giving God the freedom to move and operate within. By our cooperation, we can fully participate in God's salvation, and step by step attain the goal for which God created us.