

What We Teach

SALVATION

We teach that salvation is wholly of God by grace on the basis of the redemption of Jesus Christ, the merit of His shed blood, and not on the basis of human merit or works ([John 1:12](#); [Ephesians 1:7](#); [Ephesians 2:8-10](#); [1 Peter 1:18-19](#)).

[1 Peter 1:18-21 \(NASB\)](#)

¹⁸ knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers,

¹⁹ but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, *the blood of Christ*.

²⁰ For He was foreknown before the foundation of the world, but has appeared in these last times for the sake of you

²¹ who through Him are believers in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

The Puritan Thomas Watson rightly observed that redemption was God's greatest work: "Great was the work of creation, but greater the work of redemption; it cost more to redeem us than to make us; in the one there was but the speaking of a Word, in the other the shedding of blood. [Luke 1:51](#). The creation was but the work of God's fingers. [Psalm 8:3](#). Redemption is the work of His arm" (*Body of Divinity* [reprint; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1979], 146).

Redemption is a term that describes one of the essential features of salvation. It deals specifically with the cost of salvation and the means by which God received payment. Because all people are helpless slaves to sin and condemned by the law, if they are to be forgiven and reconciled to God, He has to purchase them back from their condition. Only then can He release them from sin's bondage and curse.

Redeemed is the key word in this passage. This term (*lutroō*) means "to purchase release by paying a ransom," or "to deliver by the payment of a price." To the Greeks the word was also a technical term for paying money to buy back a prisoner of war.

Rather than the typical Greek sense of the word, referring to slaves and prisoners, the apostle Peter's imagery describing **redemption** derives from several Old Testament passages. Undoubtedly a primary one was the narrative of the first Passover:

The lamb's life was the price required to spare the life of the Israelite family's firstborn child. The lamb was a divinely ordained illustration, and its sacrifice typified the sacrificial death of an innocent substitute that redeemed those in bondage. This Passover event immediately became the symbol of substitutionary redemption ([1 Corinthians 5:7-8](#)). God further decreed that Israel annually celebrate Passover to perpetually remind the nation of His powerful deliverance of her from Egypt ([Deuteronomy 16:2-3, 5-7](#)) and to point the people toward the true Lamb who would one day die and rise again as the perfect and final substitutionary sacrifice to redeem sinners with His blood (cf. [Matthew 26:28](#); [John 1:29](#); [1 Corinthians 11:25-26](#); [Hebrews 9:11-12, 28](#)).