

Redemption

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[0 : 00] We now turn to words in the chapter we read together in Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7. Ephesians chapter 1 and verse 7.

In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.

And these words in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins according to the riches of his grace.

And what I should like to think of the different points I should like to meditate on with you this evening as we are enabled by the Lord's own Holy Spirit, without whom we can do nothing, are these.

First of all, who are the we mentioned by Paul in these words? In whom we have redemption.

[1 : 08] And secondly, the question, what is this possession? They now have or had when Paul wrote these words.

The possession that he describes as redemption, the forgiveness of sins. For you notice that he uses both these terms to express the blessing that they possess.

We have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. And then he tells us in whom they have this redemption and the forgiveness of sins.

And also the source from which these blessings flow. According, he says, to the riches of his grace. That is the source from which redemption flows freely to sinners. Who then is Paul talking about or writing about when he speaks of people who have redemption?

[2 : 32] One of the, well, what ought to be a very interesting way of approach to the study of the Bible is the way of discovery by archaeologists who, especially in the past hundred years and more, said about excavating places in these regions of which the Gospels and Acts and the Epistles tell us.

Now, it was in the early 1860s anyway that excavations began in Ephesus. The reason that I mentioned this particular approach to the study of any of these epistles is that they help us to an understanding of the fact that we are dealing here with reality.

Not vague abstractions that are dealing with places and people that may have been or that may not have been.

We are dealing with real places and real people. Now, in these excavations, proof, almost beyond reckoning, have come to light.

Establishing the factuality of the accounts that we have in the New Testament. Places that are mentioned and described for us.

[4 : 41] Not just towns and cities whose names we have, but places within the confines of any given city, such, for example, as Ephesus.

In the latter part of last century, I must say that all of the important places, and there are several of them, not just one or two, but several places mentioned in connection with the missionary work of Paul in this very city.

They have been discovered, and discovered in such detail, that the very measurements of places as we shall see, such as the temple of Diana of the Ephesians, can be given to within one foot by the people who made these discoveries and went into such details in regard to these buildings.

Of course, the passage of so many centuries meant that they had to dig deeply to a depth usually of over 20 feet below the levels of the ground on which houses are now built in this area.

Now, I often wonder about the kind of picture people may have in their minds of these regions in apostolic times.

[6 : 28] Perhaps often the image people have is one of poverty, even abject poverty, of total backwardness in every sense of the word.

Perhaps even in material things. But there was no evidence of any kind of development or progress in the lives of those people.

You know, that's a very false picture. Ephesus was a very, very busy city.

It was a commercial center. And if you were to look at a map, you would see reasons why Ephesus would develop as such reasons similar to certain cities, especially seaports in our own country. When the Industrial Revolution especially came, there were certain areas that were natural for development and growth in our own nation.

[7 : 43] Now, if you were to look at the location of Ephesus, you would see similar reasons for Ephesus developing in that way as a commercial and trading city.

It is, or it was, on the west coast of what is now Turkey, on the Aegean Sea, at the confluence of two rivers, and you know how rivers played such a prominent part because of their usefulness for transport in the development of towns and cities and regions.

Well, Ephesus was especially blessed in its location in that there were two rivers flowing into the Aegean Sea in its neighborhood.

And roads were built leading into the inland areas so that people living in other cities and townships throughout the whole of that region known as Asia Minor traded freely with Ephesus.

So that's the picture you have of this one of a bustling city full of people engaged in various activities. And certainly far removed from a state of abject poverty.

[9 : 15] Now, these natural advantages that Ephesus had as I mentioned resulted in great development in the area and especially in the city by the time that Paul arrived in Ephesus.

It is said to have become the chief emporium of trade on the nearest side of the Tauros. That was a region in Asia Minor.

And as I mentioned at the beginning there are piles of ruined edifices which are still visible.

But you would see now if you were able to visit this region which are memorials of places mentioned in the scriptures like the stadium, the theater.

It was the scene of the tumult, you remember, raised by Demetrius and of the Agora, you remember, through which the mob rushed into the meeting place as a result of the it was simply a riot that arose from the effects of the gospel preached by Paul in Ephesus.

[10 : 43] But there was one building and you might think, some of you might be questioning what is the purpose of all this in the preaching of the gospel. Well, there was one special building in the city of Ephesus, known as the temple of Diana of Ephesians.

It surpassed all the rest of the city and its buildings. It glittered as Connibir and Howson, two authors of last century, describe it.

It glittered in brilliant beauty at the head of the harbor in Ephesus. And it was reckoned by the ancients to be one of the seven wonders of the world.

The scale of the temple was magnificently extensive. It was over 420 feet long, 220 broad, and its columns numbering 127, were 60 feet high.

Each of them, we are told, was the gift of a king. And 36 of them were enriched with ornaments and color. The value and fame of the temple enhanced by its being the treasury of the whole of that region, western Asia, where its wealth was stirred up, was great, so great, that you remember the worship of Diana of the Ephesians had extended throughout the whole of the known world.

[12 : 38] world. It is possible, we are told, that there was no religious building in the whole world in which was concentrated a greater amount of admiration, of enthusiasm, and of superstition.

Now, what was it that those multitude of worshippers of Diana of the Ephesians worshippers?

Well, this is a description of the object of their worship. The image of Diana was primitive and rude, like the idols of the Far East and those of the religions which represent all of life as being fed from the many breasts of nature.

It was made of wood, but a bar of metal was in each hand. It was believed to have come down from heaven, from the sky, and for all its pathetic primitiveness, it was the object of the utmost veneration.

you cannot answer the question, who are the we? And Paul mentions in this way, in whom we have redemption without including such as have been worshippers of that wooden god in the temple of Diana of the Ephesians.

[14 : 39] And that is the reason why I gave that description of the stone of Esther. You will realize that they were in some respect an advanced and an active and a progressive people.

In so far as material wealth was concerned, there was no more enviable town possibly on the pit of the earth when Paul arrived there with the gospel.

It was filled with worshippers of a little idol goddess. one of the idolatrous customs of that world, of the apostles, was the use of portable images.

That is, images produced as imitations, as it were, of the goddess Diana, which was kept permanently in her own temple in Ephesus.

There were imitations of it. They were used in processions and in military expeditions and as household gods. They could be of wood, some of them were of gold and of silver, and there resulted in an extent of what we can see from the book of Acts.

[16 : 18] It resulted in an expensive and a very lucrative trade being carried on, especially in Ephesus itself. And as I mentioned, this worship was so widespread that it was recognized by the whole world of that day.

There was a high priest and priests and they all walked high in the city of Ephesus. And along with them, there were many priestesses in the city, consecrated to the service of this goddess.

There were slaves in the service of the goddess Diana. performing duties down to the meanest and most menial, even the sweeping of the temple.

It was considered an honor for anyone to be a sweeper of the temple of Diana. We are told that on coins current in Ephesus in the days of the apostles, there was engraven the title Neochorus. meaning temple sweepers showing the city's devotion to its goddess. They wished to exhibit their devotion to the goddess Diana on their very coins, so proud and boastful were they of their special religion.

[18 : 04] And we must remember that among these people there was a great deal of order. They had their senate, they had their magistrate, seeing that law and order was kept in Ephesus.

And we are told that there was a special month in the calendar, the month of May. and its speciality was this, that it was, it also was consecrated to the glory of the goddess Diana.

And from all the towns and townships and villages, round the coast and in the interior, Ionians came up with their wives and children in the month of May to watch the gymnastic and musical contests and the various kinds of amusements relating to the wishes of the goddess Diana.

Does that remind you of anything, of any particular age or generation or country? and then we, as we find in scripture also, it is known historically that there was in addition to the worship of Diana, the practice of magic.

The two were very closely related. This folk goddess and magic. There were mysterious symbols in use which they called Ephesian letters.

[19 : 54] These were engraved on the crown, on the girdle, and on the feet of the goddess. And they were regarded as a charm. And when people were supposed to be suffering affliction, for example, to be in the grip of evil spirits, these charms, were considered very useful as a means of deliverance from that particular affliction, along with many others.

When Paul arrived in that city, he was up against something similar to what Moses and Aaron had to take when they went to Egypt.

you remember that they were up against the work of magicians. People who deceived the people with practical demonstrations of what seemed to be supernatural power.

So that after Moses began to testify to the fact that he was there as God's messenger, there were countless feasts of the miracles performed by God in Egypt through the magic of these people.

But in Ephesus you remember the name of the Lord Jesus was glorified through the demonstrations of divine power performed through Paul God's servant and these produced a powerful effect upon the minds of the people in Ephesus.

[21 : 49] The age of which Paul writes was an age full of superstition and of imposture. One of which it is clearly true that the power of evil manifested themselves with very peculiar force and strength.

And we find therefore in Paul's writings because of his personal experience of the power of darkness so rampant in these forms in his generation we find him warning people against witchcraft and evil men and seducers as he tells Timothy who shall walk worse and worse deceiving and being deceived.

And you remember how it comes to light in the book of Acts that even amongst the Jews most know those of the inhabitants of Ephesus were Gentiles but there were also Jews as you remember scattered through the known world at that time and we find some of them in Ephesus and they are also engaged in the magic act scorn Jesus said

I know and Paul I know but who are you and then we read that the possessed man sprang upon them so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded and so fast was the city of Ephesus held in the grip of idolatry especially the worship of Diana the goddess and of the magic art that we are told that when the gospel power began to influence those poor people that the sale of the shrine and of the image of Diana was reduced and those who profited from the manufacture and sale of these images suffered great loss and as a result of their loss we read about a great tumult that arose if you look through the 19th chapter of the book of

Acts you will see how there arose a tumult that a direct result of this loss of gain through the reduction of the sale of the shrine and image of Diana raised by Demetrius one of the master manufacturers of these images and how the confusion spread throughout the whole city now these are the kind of people religiously of whom Paul here speaks insofar as the Gentiles and some of the Jews were concerned a generation people devoted to the worship of Diana great Diana of the Ephesians as their God and to the magic us that were so closely related to the idolatry

[25 : 57] Paul himself you remember was of a different class religiously as you read the third chapter of Philippians Paul was from infancy a deeply religious session he belonged to a deeply religious family and they were so far from worshipping anything like the goddess Diana of the Ephesians that their book their special book was that they were worshippers of the one living and true God they were of the seed of Abraham they were Abraham's children they were the people of God they were people who had remained and intended forever to continue faithful to the worship of the true God amongst the we mentioned in this version so however we might describe them they are all to be included in the race of sinners but if you were to read through the epistle to the

Ephesians you would find terms such as the following Gentiles people who were without God and without hope in the world people enveloped in darkness that was almost verging on uttermost darkness where shone not a glimmering of spiritual light at all they were aliens from the commonwealth of Israel there was a wall as it were a dividing wall between them and all of God's ordinances the truth of God with its divine light had not yet penetrated into the darkness of their heathen God through Paul describes them as people who were far off he who once were far off far off from whom or from what far off from

God far off from God's way of salvation in the broad way that was leading to destruction there are people described in their natural state as at enmity with God with the law of commandments standing as it were as a barrier between them and every blessing strangers and foreigners to these blessings even to the external blessings enjoyed by God's Indian people they were obviously a people who were prone now to falling into sin they are living amongst a people who had no grasp of truth doctrinary so that they could be easily led and deceived by evil men men who were walking he tells us in the vanity of their minds having their understanding darkened they were given to lying now I gather these from references from

Paul's epistle to the Ephesians that they were given to lying to anger to submitting to the devil's power and cunning and devices there were amongst them those guilty of thieving corrupt communications from their lips there was within them bitterness wrath anger clamor and outwardly evil speaking springing from the malice that governed their hearts and purposes in relation to their fellow men there were people living in darkness you remember how he mentions specific other sins in practice so very relevant to her own day the sin of drunkenness and you remember how at the end of this epistle Paul gives holy exhortations regarding several relationships interrelationships that existed then as now amongst men and women and children he exhorts husbands and wives regarding their relationships one with another he exhorts parents and children children and parents he exhorts masters and servants and why all these exhortations because

Paul knew that he was teaching and preaching and counseling in a generation given to unfaithfulness in all of these relationships and who needed the grace of God to live in obedience to God's holy will well it was out of that generation from amongst such a people that those came of whom he now says in whom we have redemption in whom we have redemption now a word about that precious possession redemption you remember because the time always seems to defeat us we shall look immediately at the special blessing which seems to equate here with redemption the

forgiveness of sins the term redemption itself was used of people such as prisoners of war and slaves who were set free but who were set free in a very special manner people who had their freedom purchased for them for whose freedom a price had to be paid and this word that Paul uses here appears exactly ten times in the

[32 : 56] New Testament and not long ago I came across this strange fact in comparison with that number of times ten in the New Testament it has been discovered eight times in the whole of Greek literature outside the New Testament now what is the reason for that for the frequency of the use of this word redemption in the New Testament well there are some people here who know they will tell you that in all probability it is because redemption has such a place in the New Testament and indeed in the Old Testament also because the word of

God has come to a world needing redemption as glad tidings which is unto all people glad tidings that tell that there is such a thing as redemption a real redemption a redemption that has been wrought by God and that is being freely offered by God and that is being powerfully applied by God in the case of multitudes in every generation so that throughout eternity there shall be praises resounding to God for this one reason that there is redemption divine redemption made freely over by

God to sinners in this world and people like Paul knew that it was a unique redemption you can make that an additional factor that they knew this redemption was a unique such a unique redemption that supposing the word had never been retained in any other kind of literature it had to be retained and used repeatedly in the gospel they preached and in the epistles that they wrote redemption was of the very essence of God's message to a sinful world now as I said and as the verse shows us Paul here seems to equate that redemption with one particular blessing we know from other scriptures that redemption is a very inclusive embracing kind of term because it is something that bears upon the whole destiny of men men are sinners held deserving sinners who are put in possession of everlasting glory in soul and in body then there is this special blessing in redemption so special that

Paul says in whom we have redemption through his blood the forgiveness of sins the forgiveness of sins a word that has in it first of all in the old testament the idea of atonement covering it involves the covering over of a person's sins covering over to what purpose covering over so that they are no longer charged against one by God the judge that is what the atonement meant covering in order that the eye the judicial eye of the judge of all the earth should not regard a sinner's sins with the intention of charging him with his sins in order to make him suffer the penalty his sins deserved it is a word that to some extent men can understand because of the fact that they are called upon by

God to show forgiveness in relation to their fellow men and especially is this true of every gracious soul in the world they have a witness within themselves as a matter of personal spiritual experience of what divine forgiveness means they ought to be able to understand that when someone offends them confesses their guilt that it is their privilege it is a privilege not just a duty but a privilege to forgive that guilt meaning that the relationship of friendship abides it was broken but when forgiveness is asked and forgiveness is offered it is restored do we know is there anyone here tonight who does not know truly know in their heart what forgiveness means that is the blessing a divine forgiveness that

[39 : 51] Paul here relates so closely to redemption that it seems to be equated with redemption a forgiveness which as I said is divine I God says through the prophet Isaiah I even I am he that blotted out thy transgressions for mine own sake and will not remember thy sins but it is divine forgiveness that Paul is speaking about here I he deny am he the forgiveness is from God and it is a full forgiveness he that blotteth out thy transgressions will not remember thy sins I have blotted out as a thick cloud thy transgressions and as a cloud thy sins return unto me for

I have redeemed thee for it is a conditional blessing return unto me forgiveness that is conditional upon you repentance my repentance recently we were thinking of Christ the saviour exalted for the purpose of giving repentance and remission of sin and I am sure I would have pointed out that where there is no repentance there is no remission of sin and where there is remission of sin you can be sure that there is repentance and looking from the other viewpoint where there is repentance you can rest assured that there is remission of sin there is pardon freely given by God and is it not a blessing to remember always that this forgiveness of God is an ungrudging forgiveness I think all who wait upon the Lord conscious of their own sinfulness their own guilt their

own unworthiness are often in a frame of mind which seems to suggest at least that we think of God as a person or being if he is willing at all ever to forgive our sins that he must do it very grudgingly that we must co-estimate to giving us forgiveness of sin as if it was the very last thing that God is pleased to grant that is a false view of God sin it is a blessing also that is without repentance on God's side he tells us that the gifts and calling of God that is the gifts God grants to sinners and God's calling of sinners are without repentance meaning that God never regrets that he has granted these gifts you see yourself perhaps at this very moment so burdened in your heart with unworthiness crushed with a sense of hell deserving that you say in your heart that if God has ever forgiven one of your sins that he must know be deeply regretting that he must have long since perhaps repented that he ever gave you such a gift that is an insult to the divine being I he says will remember their sin no more that's what he says about himself when he forgives sins I will remember no more it is forgiveness that is according to God's promise and it is good for sinners who seek forgiveness to remember always first of all that God is a God who cannot lie so that his promise is true his promise was true when he uttered it he is a God who cannot lie therefore he can never have contradicted himself at any point in the meantime and [45 : 25] God is a God who cannot change and therefore you can be sure that never in the future will God as it were withhold his promise change his mind as to how he shall deal with penitent sinners who seek his pardon he is the same yesterday today and forever what he has joined together let no man put asunder if you have asked if you are a person penitent in spirit and truth who continues to ask forgiveness of God you can rest assured no matter how long you live and how many are the sins you have to confess day after day and year after year

God is the same his word is the same he changes not and his word is as fixed as himself and forgiveness is forgiveness a blessing that is in accordance with God's promise and it is a forgiveness that is for all kinds of sinners if we had a clearer understanding of the answer to the first question who are the we who have redemption in him of whom Paul writes well you would realize that it must have been a forgiveness and a redemption for all kinds of sinners sinners of the Jews sinners of the

Gentiles sinners who had a form of godliness and sinners who had none worshippers of idols like Diana of the Ephesians thieves and liars malicious men people of corrupt communication perhaps constantly using swear words idle talk and blasphemy even there was forgiveness for all kinds of sinners and of sins Paul continued to the end of this day I am sure of the view whatever sinner you named in Ephesus or in Corinth or Athens or anywhere else Paul would say of them all I am chief of the sinner and down through the generations there have been saints of

God who had that one quarrel with Paul they would say to him no you are not I am the chief of sinners the Bible speaks the Lord Jesus Christ speaks of one sin for which there is no forgiveness neither in this life nor in that which is to come the sin against the Holy Ghost but nobody guilty of the sin against the Holy Ghost has repentance no such sinner seeks the forgiveness of God from a broken heart no such sinner pleads with heaven to show favor to him for they persist in relentless opposition against the good and gracious

Holy Spirit of God and against all that he testifies to regarding the grace and love and mercy of God in Christ as far as east is distant from the west so far has he from us removed in his love all our iniquity in whom did they have this wondrous redemption well Paul as you have often heard looks upon the race of men as if they were two men or as if they were represented in two individual men regarding that teaching of

[50 : 39] Paul someone has said that it is as if the whole human family is divided between Adam and Christ one as the head of the natural race and one Christ as the head of the spiritual race that all other men are as it were eclipsed in their shadow or annihilated in their presence or absorbed in their presence John Rowan says that this constitution of things is at the very foundation of all wherein we have to do with God two individuals Adam and Christ I think at least

I dare to say that everyone here has read and perhaps even learned questions 18 and 19 of the shorter catechism wherein consists the sinfulness of that estate wherein to man fell what is the misery of that estate wherein to man fell you know the answers to these questions and the explanation or the foundation to these answers is this the answer to question 16 in the catechism did all mankind fall in Adam's first transgression and you remember the answer regarding the covenant being made with Adam not only for himself but for his posterity all mankind descending from him fell in his fall for by one man written in the word of

God sin entered into the world and death by sin and so death passed upon all men and through the offense of one many be dead and the judgment was by one to condemnation and by the offense of that one judgment came upon all condemnation but there is another as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous i will give you an exercise that you should find interesting read perhaps tonight paul's epistle to the ephesians and i guarantee you if anything special strikes you in that epistle this way the phrase in christ in christ those who receive the letter are called the faithful in christ they are described as having been blessed with all spiritual blessings in christ they are called the accepted in the beloved in christ they obtained an inheritance in christ they were chosen in christ they have trusted in christ they were sealed with the holy spirit of promise in christ they were made to sit in heavenly places in christ they were created unto good works by god in christ they were made nigh in christ they were part of a building fitly framed together as a dwelling for god and they are known now as saints faithful blessed predestinated adopted sealed and fellow citizens of the saints but this is the essence of the whole matter that they are in christ now when that word that phrase is used at times the emphasis is on this on a union that had come to subsist between them and christ they were united to him in god's purpose in eternity before ever the word was when they were blessed there was a union actually formed spiritually between them as individuals and christ a very living union but here i accept the comment of professor smitten who taught in her own church of last century who says that the emphasis is here rather on objectivity in the same sense as our fall is in Adam objectively that is out with ourselves and in Adam as a distinct passion from ourselves who was the very first man separated from us by almost all of past time so in christ we have redemption as someone who lived and died 2000 years ago he was not that far removed from the people in Ephesus who were blessed but he is not far removed from us in time historically but they were no more in him than we were in him objectively if we are his for whom he died and it is through his blood and I am sorry that

I cannot enlarge as I have decided on that subject through his blood you think of christ think of the glory of christ incarnate the god man think of the glory of his life the perfectly sinless holy one of god think of the glory of his teaching in the world think of the glory of the miracles that he performed in the world think of the glory of the love that he manifested to sinners in the world but none of these all of them together were sufficient for our redemption our redemption could only come to us through his blood his blood which means his death he had to die if there was to be redemption for such as we are his life was not sufficient but his blood was sufficient and you will allow me although the time has passed to read to you a passage that from the first time I read it and that is many years ago has left

[58 : 55] I think an indelible impression upon my own spirit it is in a sermon preached by one of the greatest divines I dare say who has ever graced the Christian church Samuel Brotherford and he was speaking upon these words and he was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood that Brotherford said is a strange garment I leave all expositions and take it to be Christ in his suffering clothes wooing his kirth represented thus to John in his wooing clothes he is also represented so in Isaiah 63 2 wherefore art thou red in thine apparel and thy garments like him that treadeth in the wine fat

Christ in his suffering for us was wet to the skin in his own blood when he was slaying our enemies he was all bloody to look upon even a loch of blood dropping blood oh then come and see if he be not a red man had there been but a drop of blood here and there upon him it had been less but he was all dyed with his own blood for blood dropped from him and he wet the ground where he lay and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground so as I think for the space of near hand 24 hours the blood got not leave to dry on Christ in his suffering for us for after supper in the garden he swat a sweat of blood that wet the ground he lay on and it would be long ere he dried then immediately after that there came a band of men with lanterns and torches and they bound him and led him away and he got blue marks anew

Pilate then scourged him and blood came upon blood then a crown of thorns was put upon his head to renew his blood again first God bled him then man bled him and then the laying on of the cross upon his holy shoulders would blood for his wounds could not be closed then and then his holy hands and feet were nailed to the cross and he hung bleeding there until the ninth hour which was about three in the afternoon of the day after he was taken then his side was pushed until blood and water came out so as from after supper in one night until it was near night the day following he was under blood what think he now of Christ's bloody coat and bloody skin was he not a strong keen

warrior fought he not well for you is he not well worthy of your love
God grant him good of it and joy of it he fought for it and would not give over the play and God
forbid he had given it over and rendered up the cause woe then had it been to us should he not
then give your best things to Christ for he gave the best things he had for you even his precious
blood for the life is in the blood he seeks no more but the blood and life of your heart idols and your
sins for say see I slew myself for you and if he love me give blood for blood the source of
redemption and forgiveness and of the blood the precious blood of Christ are the riches the infinite
riches of the grace of
God may he bless these thoughts let us pray