

WHAT IS
THE SOLUTION
TO SIN IN
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ACT 3: REDEMPTION

"He made Him to be sin who know no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." — 2 Cor. 5:23

The Bible's story of God begins with the phenomenal acts of God in creation. It was exceedingly "good" beyond our present imagination. The story progresses with a description of the fall of humans and the world, and the storyline appears exceedingly bleak. The question is whether there is any hope, or if all is lost. The rest of the Bible, after Genesis 3, is a chronicle of God solving the problem of sin.

There are many stories where sin seems to be winning the battle, but the reality is that God is sovereign and is bringing about His will of salvation and restoration for all of His creation. Redemption is one of the words used to describe the fact that God is taking the fallen world and humanity back to Himself. Further, redemption is a big word in the Old Testament, with Ruth, and in the New Testament, with Paul (see Romans 3:24). Let's look at six important questions about redemption.

WHAT IS SO SPECIAL ABOUT JESUS?

The story of Jesus is at the heart of the story of the Bible and redemption. He is "God of very God," as the early church fathers would say. John 1:1 says "in the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." The use of the term "Word" is a way of saying "Jesus", as John 1:14 says that the "Word became flesh." Jesus is God. We briefly discussed that in the first booklet, as we asserted that the Bible believes in a triune God, and Jesus is the second person of the Godhead.

While Jesus is nothing less than God, He is also fully human. Philippians 2:5-8 tells us that even though Jesus shared in all that it means to be God, He "humbled Himself and took on flesh." He took on humanity. He became the "God-man". He was one person with two natures. That is an almost unbelievable and very important truth of the Christian faith. In being both God and man, He is able to bring salvation to creation. He was born to die and rise so that we might live in Him. Hallelujah, what a Savior!

▶▶ Read Philippians 2:5-10 and write what will happen in the end to show what the “humble” Jesus will be in the future:

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF THE DEATH OF JESUS ON THE CROSS?

When a huge event occurs, the question of its significance is often discussed. As I write this, it is the evening before one of the Super Bowl championships. The commentators will talk tomorrow—and for several weeks after the game—as to how it fits into history. Based on the amount of money spent on this game, marketers think the Super Bowl is of enormous significance. I think the birth of my granddaughter two weeks ago was much more significant, which shows that I do not agree with the marketing people.

The fact is, there was not a more important and cosmically significant event ever than the death of Jesus, nor will there ever be. There are several important words that help us get a better idea of the meaning of the cross. Here are some to consider:

1) *Substitutionary atonement*

Jesus died in our place. Romans 5:8 is a wonderful passage that says that “God demonstrated his love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, he died *for us*” (emphasis mine). That word “for” has a deep meaning. It definitely means that we deserved to die for our sins, but Jesus took our place. He died instead of us.

2) *Redemption*

This is the title of this act of the story of Jesus. The word redemption comes from the market, when a person buys something for a price. It was often used when buying a slave from the slave market and bringing the redeemed slave to the owner. It is used a bit like that in Ruth. She was poor and asked Boaz to redeem her, so she could be his, and he did so with a price and made her his wife. Jesus bought His redeemed from the slave market of sin and brought us to Himself.

3) *Propitiation*

This is a big word that we seldom use any more. It is used in Romans 3:25. Jesus’ death satisfied the wrath of the Father, and that allows us to come to the Father in salvation. Romans 1:18 says that the righteous God cannot look on sin, and His response to sin is wrath. The Son took that wrath so we would not have to bear it. II Corinthians 5:21 is a profound verse as it says that the Father made the Son to be sin (sin bearer) for us, though he never sinned in order that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. He became the sin bearer and bore the wrath of the Father for us!

HOW BIG IS THE RESURRECTION OF JESUS?

Jesus rose bodily from the dead, and that is of huge significance. Many have tried to deny that supernatural reversal of death, but there is great evidence for its truthfulness. What difference does it make that He is risen? Here are a few reasons:

1) *He conquered death.*

1 Corinthians 15:55 taunts death by saying that it has lost its sting. Death is no longer the final story. Death is defeated, and sin's power is defeated in the resurrection of Jesus. It still exists, but only for a short time.

2) *We will be resurrected.*

(1 Thessalonians 4:13-18) The day will come when the redeemed will be resurrected as immortal. It will be the great day of the Lord's return.

3) *We can have hope, joy, and motivation to live the resurrected life today.*

(Philippians 3:10)

Jesus' resurrection gives us hope for today as well as for tomorrow. We can experience the "power of the resurrection" today as we live out the reality of Jesus' redemptive work.

▶▶ What does Romans 6:1-14 tell us about the power of the resurrection?

List two or more comments

WHAT BENEFITS ARE RECEIVED FOR THE REDEEMED?

Benefits beyond imagination await the Christian who trusts in Jesus. The Bible describes the blessings of the redeemed in magnificent terms. It is not necessarily health and wealth on this current earth, but the benefits are bigger than mere money. Make it a goal of your life to read the Bible and praise God for His unspeakable gift in Jesus and all the blessings He bestows on His people. Here is a brief list of only a few of the benefits:

1) **Adoption**

We are adopted as “sons of God.” This makes us joint heirs with Jesus. Ephesians 1:5 tells us that we are adopted for His glory.

2) **Justification**

This is another big word that has deep meaning in the Bible. It means to be “declared righteous” and happens to the believer upon salvation. It has at least two aspects to it in that tell us we are forgiven of our sins. We are cleansed, but that is not all. We also have the righteousness of Jesus imputed to our account. It is not merely that you have your slate cleaned, but you have the righteousness of God in your account. It would be like having someone clear your \$1 million credit card debt and then putting a balance on your card of \$1 billion for you to use. It is greater than that! Philippians 3:9 speaks of this justification, as Paul tells us that he wanted to be found in Christ, “not having a righteousness of my own . . . but the righteousness of God that depends on faith. Justification is a true gift from God!

3) **Reconciliation**

The redeemed of God are reconciled with God. II Corinthians 5:19 affirms that “God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.” We are able to come into fellowship with God again. We are no longer estranged from Him but are now reconciled to Him.

HOW CAN A PERSON BE SAVED OR REDEEMED?

The Bible is clear that no person can work his way to God. All our work is not enough. One of the clearest verses in all the story of the Bible is in Ephesians 2:8-9, which says that “*by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourself, it is the gift of God, not of works lest any man would boast.*” The word *faith* can also be thought of as *believe*. In the Bible, it is a statement of personal and radical trust. It is not merely an agreement to something we think is good. It is the full trust and belief that children have in their parents. The believer fully entrusts his salvation to Jesus, becomes a “new creation,” and is fully God’s.

It is also true that redemption is a word suggesting a need. We are dead in sin as mentioned above and all of our righteousness is woefully inadequate—so says the Bible in Romans 3:1-18. Since we are what we are, faith is the solution in that we trust in the work of Jesus while understanding our sinfulness.

Faith is not as easy as it sounds. While it is not works that merit salvation, faith will see results in one's life. Jesus says that if you will be His disciple and fully trust in Him, you will come with Him through good and bad and suffering and rejoicing. It is an all or nothing. Jesus must be Lord (Romans 10:9-10), and when He is, the believer will have a life of great glory to the praise of the Redeemer.

WHAT DOES ONE DO AFTER SALVATION?

That is a huge question. You can read the Bible to find the full answer. Here are a few suggestions to move you along the correct path of the Christian life:

First, a believer will associate with a local church. Church attendance does not bring one merit before God. But a true believer will meet with the assembly of the redeemed. We are saved to be in community. (See Hebrews 10:25, which speaks to that issue, as do other passages in the Bible.)

Second, the believer in the fellowship of the church will listen to the Word of God preached, and will participate in the Lord's Supper (I Corinthians 11) regularly, will experience baptism upon salvation, and will find a place of ministry as a servant of Jesus. It is a privilege to serve Him. The Christian life would also see a desire to have fellowship with our Savior in regular prayer and study of God's Word.

Third, the believer will be experiencing a life that is progressively putting to death the deeds of the flesh (Romans 6) while living a more holy life, often called becoming sanctified. This is an ongoing, gradual process – one that will be evident in the lives of true believers. Romans 6 is very helpful in describing this.

In summary, "Act Three" is the reason the Bible was written. It is the Good News (often called the Gospel) that Jesus came into the world to save sinners. It is the hope for a fallen world. And it is all to bring glory to the God who not only creates but also redeems.

BRIEF QUIZ

1) If someone were to ask you "How can I be saved?" what would you say?

2) Briefly describe your own personal salvation. Use at least two verses from this booklet.

3) Briefly define the following words:

▶▶ Justification

▶▶ Redemption

▶▶ Substitution

4) What does it mean that Jesus is the God-man?



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