

Our Awesome Kinsman Redeemer, Pt. III

As in the Old Testament, the New Testament employs two very closely related words to describe Christ's deliverance activity: the first is translated *redeemed* and it is found in such places as Gal 3:13, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-- ..." This word means to buy back or to deliver. The second word, usually rendered *ransom*, signifies a price paid for release from slavery or captivity. It is applied to the cost Christ paid (price of release) in providing deliverance from sin. Jesus employs this word with regard to his First Coming, "even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many." Mt 20:28. When we combine these two words, *redeem and ransom*, we get a full picture of the atoning sacrifice of Christ: it is a payment made to God the Father by Christ for the redemption of his people

The central, controlling meaning of Christmas is that Christ, the Kinsman-Redeemer of God's covenant people, that is to say, of those people that God the Father chose in Christ in eternity past unto himself for his own glory, humiliated himself by assuming the "likeness of sinful flesh," Rom 8:2, to pay the bridal price for his church "which he obtained with his own blood." Acts 20:28. He did this in order that his people may receive the fullness of their redemption, their adoption as sons of God, Gal 4:5. "So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God." v. 7.

At Christmas, we celebrate Christ who comes to pay the debt of our sin so that God could restore to us, the rights and privileges of adoption lost by Adam's sin. As God's children, we are "heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, ..." Rom 8:17. It is only because of Christ and it is only because we are in Christ, that we can lay claim to this eternal inheritance, Eph 1:11, which is guaranteed by the indwelling Holy Spirit, v. 14. On the cross, Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, paid the price, our debt so that we may gain our inheritance. Christ is "...the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant." Heb 9:15.

As the Author of our redemption, God the Father sends his Son, Jesus Christ, to secure our inheritance by paying the moral debt or ransom we owe as covenant-breakers, 1 Tim 2:5-6. In so doing, Christ our Kinsman-Redeemer, delivers us from bondage to sin and Satan by paying the sin debt that is owed to God and not to Satan, as some erroneously teach. This he satisfies with the voluntary sacrifice of his own life in our place and on our behalf. As our Kinsman-Redeemer, Christ executes vengeance against his enemies on the cross in order to secure our deliverance. There, he not only canceled the record of an overwhelming debt that we could not pay, but he also "...disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in him." Col 2:14-15.

So you see my friends, Christmas is not something we do; rather, it is something that happens to us, it is something that is thrust upon us from above, from heaven by our Triune God. At the very heart of the Christmas event is Jesus Christ who comes in the similitude of Yahweh in the Old Testament, to redeem and to ransom his people by the payment of this blood so that they can receive the full inheritance of sonship and eternal life in the presence of the Triune God, now and forever. Christmas is not defined by Macy's with its best deals, by Best Buy with its enticing offers or by Amazon with his endless seductive efforts to separate us from our money. Christmas has an essentially redemptive ring to it, a resounding sound infinitely more significant than the chime of commercial cash registers and immeasurably more meaningful than the peal of the Salvation Army's bells. For in it we honor and herald the coming of our Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ who, in his sinless life and in his death, burial and resurrection, redeems, ransoms and reconciles us back to God.