

THE REDEEMED EXODUS 13:1-16

INTRODUCTION:

God introduced the word “redeemed” into the language of faith in the early chapters of the Bible. It became one of the basic words to set forth the theme of the Bible. The Bible itself can be called: “The Story of Redemption.” From the beginning to the consummation in the book of the Revelation it is about the redemptive work of God.

God built into the understanding of the people of Israel the basic concept of redemption. He wanted them to see themselves as being “the redeemed.” Since the things that happened to them were designed so that they could teach us a lesson about who we are, we read the record of their redemption with believing eyes.

In the time of their deliverance from the bondage in Egypt, God gave them the law of the first born. Written into the record in Exodus is a description of what it means to be the redeemed. Every time there was a first-born child in a family, or first-born lamb in the flock, the reality of redemption was renewed in the understanding of the people. And then as they observed the Feast of the Unleavened Bread year after year, the memory was renewed. God wanted His people to understand that they were the redeemed.

It is important that you and I maintain a prospective on ourselves that says, “We are the redeemed.” And we are! Let’s take a careful look at this Old Testament Record so that we can renew our own awareness of who we are as the redeemed of the Lord.

I. OUR REDEMPTION

Our redemption required a price.

The redemption principle is that of substitution. Redemption always involves a price. The word itself means to release by the payment of a price.

1. The lamb for the first-born.

On that tragic night in Egypt, the first-born in each Israelite family was spared. The basis for the first-born being spared was that a lamb had died earlier in the evening. The lamb was slain as a substitutionary sacrifice for the first-born of the family. If no lamb was slain then the first-born son would die. This is the basis of God’s claim upon the first-born in the Israelite family. The first-born has been redeemed by the death of a lamb.

2. The lamb or the donkey

In the instruction that the Lord gave through Moses we read: “Redeemed with a lamb every first-born donkey but if you do not redeem it, break its neck. Redeem every first born among your sons.” In the period of the law the donkey was considered to be an unclean animal. When a donkey was born as the first born from its mother, it had to be redeemed. If it was not redeemed, then its neck had to be broken. The price for the redemption of the donkey because of

its uncleanness was a lamb. The principle stands throughout the Scripture that there can be no redemption without the payment of a price.

This is the great principle that we discover in the New Testament. Our Lord Himself said, “Just as the son of man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Matt.20:28). The Lord Jesus gave himself as the ransom price, the price of redemption for us. In another great statement the Apostle Paul said, “In Him we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins” (Ephesians 1:7). Then the Apostle declares for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and are justified freely by His grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in His blood” (Romans 3:23-25). You must keep in mind always that your redemption required a price. God paid the price of your redemption by the offering of His son as a lamb to be slain in your place. We are to God like the first- born of Israel. We too, have been redeemed by the payment of a price.

II. THE REDEEMED BELONG TO GOD.

This is the great blessing set forth in the law of the first-born. Those who are redeemed belong to God. God has total claim upon the life of the redeemed.

1. This is acknowledged in consecration.

“Consecrate to me every first-born male. The first-born off spring of every womb among he Israelites belong to me whether man or animal.” In this word of command, God calls for the consecration of the first-born. This is an act that has two sides. To consecrate something is to

separate it unto the Lord and thereby to acknowledge His ownership of it. And then to consecrate it is to separate it from the world. That which has been consecrated to God cannot be used for common or secular uses. In the case of the first-born sons of Israel this meant that they were consecrated to priesthood for the family. They would not be kings or artisans but would rather be priests. They would not do the work of the other members of the family because they were devoted to the Lord in priesthood. The animals that were the first-born in the flocks would in the same way be consecrated to God. They would be offered to God as a sacrifice since they were His.

Later in His dealing with Israel God changed the law of the first-born and made the tribe of Levi the priestly tribe for all the others. By this act the first-born sons of Israel were released from the responsibility of priesthood for the nation. But they still lived with that awareness that they were the redeemed.

All of us who have been redeemed by the blood of Jesus should acknowledge His ownership of our lives by the consecration of ourselves to the Lord. This involves separation unto the Lord and separation from the world. We have no right to use our lives for our own selfish ambitions since we belong to the Lord. This is true for all of the redeemed.

2. We acknowledge this in confession.

The Lord gave instruction in the law of the first-born about making such a confession. During the Feast of Unleavened bread they were to make a confession every year. "I do this because of

what the Lord did for me when I came out of Egypt.” They were to give this to their children as an explanation for the Feast.

And then the Lord gave instructions that when they came into the land of the Canaanites that they were to make the confession to their children about the significance of this law of the first-born. “With a mighty hand the Lord brought us out of Egypt, the land of slavery. When Pharaoh stubbornly refused to let us go, the Lord killed every first-born in Egypt, both man and animal. This is why I sacrifice to the Lord the first male offering of every womb and redeemed each of my first-born sons.” This confession was to be like a sign on the hand or a symbol on the forehead.

The Jews adopted a literal understanding of this statement. They fastened little trinkets to their hands and on their forehead in which they carried portions of Scripture in their attempt to obey this law. It may well be that it should have been understood symbolically as they obeyed the Lord in making the confession about the redemption that had taken place in Egypt, this was the thing that would be a sign and a reminder to them. But the confession is the essential thing!

We must ever continue to sing the songs that confess us to be the redeemed. We must continue to give testimony to the world that that we have been bought with a price! We belong to God because we are the redeemed.

III. THE REDEEMED SHOULD REMEMBER WHO THEY ARE.

This is the burden of this text. God did not want Israel to ever forget that they had been redeemed. This was the reason for the law of the first-born – every time there was a birth that involved a first-born throughout the land either in the family or the herds – there would be a remembrance that God had redeemed them. Every year in the first month as they observed the Feast of Unleavened Bread, there would be remembrance that they were the redeemed. The remembrance of this is of utmost importance.

1. Remembering encourages gratitude.

The great danger for Israel was that they would forget. If they forgot then gratitude for what God had done would die. When gratitude died they would lose their own identity as the people of God.

This is the reason that the Lord gave us the supper to observe. He wanted us to remember so that gratitude would continually be stirred in our hearts. We must not forget – we are the redeemed! As the redeemed our hearts should ever be overflowing toward God with Hallelujahs and thanksgivings.

2. Remembrance encourages obedience.

This gave Israel reason to obey the Lord – they had been redeemed. A little later in this book as God gave the Ten Commandments we will hear Him say, “I am the Lord your God who brought you out of Egypt and out of the land of slavery.” Since He was the God that redeemed

them, He had the right to expect that they would obey Him. How can those who have been redeemed not obey the Lord? Would not failure to obey be the worst form of wrong and ingratitude.

This reminds me of an old story that I've read about a little girl that was tucked up in bed, and quite surprisingly she turned to her mother and said, "Mommie, I do love you." Well, the mother hoped that was always true, but she was not always reminded of it; so she asked, "Tell me, what is it that makes you say that tonight?" The little girl replied, "Mommie, I do like your lovely face and your silvery gray hair, and your bright shinning eyes, but Mommie, there is one thing I don't like." "Oh," said Mommie. "What ever is wrong? What is it you don't like?" "Mommie, I don't like your hands." Well it was true that the mother's hands were not as a lady likes for her hands to be, but there was a reason for it. Yet, she said nothing, and kissed the little girl who soon went off to sleep. The following night she thought she would tell the child a little story, and before putting her to bed she told her how, when a tiny, wee mite, lying on a rug in front of the fire a spark flew out, and set the long baby clothes ablaze. But Mommie came dashing into the room, picked up the baby in her arms and crushed her to herself, crushing out the flames but in beating out the flames her own hands were burned. She just told the story, and then it was bedtime and good night. On the third evening, as the child was going to bed, Mommie heard her say, "Mommie, I do love you." "Oh, and what now?" "Mommie, your lovely face, your silvery hair, your shinning eyes but Mommie there is something I like best of all." "What is that?" said Mommie. "Mommie, I do like your hands. I do love your hands."

Oh, when we remember, we remember that we are the redeemed and how much it costs the Lord to redeem us, we want to do His will. It awakens in us a desire to be obedient to Him in all things.

There needs to be a reawakening in the heart of the people of God an awareness that we are the redeemed!