

THE PURCHASED POSSESSION

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Text: Ephesians 1:11-14

In the eternal plan of God our salvation consists of more than the forgiveness of our sins so that when we die we will go to heaven. The plan of God includes everything from the saving of our souls to what Paul calls "the redemption of the purchased possession." What God has in mind is spectacular -- complete and final redemption! Not only did God plan to redeem our souls from the curse of sin, but He is also going to redeem our bodies from the curse of man's fall.

Paul said it this way in Romans 8:23 "...but we also who have the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our bodies."

The rapture of the church is that event which will bring about complete and final deliverance for the child of God. The rapture is that supernatural event that will take place when Christ returns for all born-again believers. We do not know the day or the hour, but we know that Christ will appear in the clouds and cause all the saints of God, living and dead, to be caught up -- literally snatched away -- from this world to meet Him in the heavens.

In his book End Times, Clyne W. Buxton explains, "The rapture is not just the wistful thinking of weary followers. It is a paramount doctrine of the Bible, for the hope of the return of Christ pervades the New Testament. The coming of the Lord is called the blessed hope (Titus 2:13), the purifying hope (I John 3:2,3), and the comforting hope (see I Thessalonians 4:18, KJV)." (Buxton, 53-54)

The rapture is the beginning of the bringing together of God's eternal plan of redemption for man and all of creation. As we look into this passage, we can see that there are several reasons for our anticipation of this blessed event.

I. WE KNOW THAT WE WERE PREDESTINED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION (v. 11-12).

A. Our redemption was not an afterthought of God.

God the Father knew before He created man that man would sin and become a fallen creation. He also knew that there would come a day when He would offer mankind the gift of redemption. This gift came through Jesus Christ. This was His purpose for coming to earth.

Galatians 4:4-5

"But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons." (italics added)

One translation renders that last verse, Galatians 4:5, as follows: "God sent him to pay for the freedom of those who were controlled by these laws so that we would be adopted as his children." (God's Word Series, italics added)

It was God's preordained plan or predestined plan to redeem all mankind. Predestination is simply this: God predestined or pre-planned that all who would believe would be saved.

B. The eternal plan of God's redemption called for our salvation (or deliverance).

I Peter 1:3-5 and vv. 20-21

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy has begotten us again to a lively hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled and that does not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith for salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.

(vv. 20-21) He (Christ) indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God."

Salvation is mankind's destiny! But we must choose to follow God's plan.

II. WE KNOW THAT WE HAVE BEEN SEALED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION (v. 13).

A. The Holy Spirit seals those who have "trusted" and "believed" in Christ.

The thirteenth verse in the New Revised Standard Version says that we "were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit.."

This "seal" is a distinguishing mark upon a person's life and character.

"...for Paul this coming of the Spirit produced in the person concerned something recognizable, and its absence in a Christian was noticeable (Ac. 10:47, 19:2). It was this difference in the character of the person which was the seal of the Spirit -- the marks in human life produced by the coming of the Spirit." (Mitton, 61)

II Timothy 2:19 speaks of that "seal,"

"Nevertheless the solid foundation of God stands, having this seal: 'The Lord knows those who are His,' and, 'Let everyone who names the name of Christ depart from iniquity.'"

B. The Holy Spirit seals those who believe to assure them of the reality of their salvation.

Francis Foulkes explains, "The Holy Spirit is the Christian's seal. The experience of the Holy Spirit in their lives is the final proof to them, and indeed a demonstration to others, of the genuineness of what they have believed, and provides the inward assurance that they belong to God as children." (Foulkes, 64)

Romans 8:16 tells us, "The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are the children of God, (v.17) and if children, then heirs -- heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...."

III. WE KNOW THAT WE WERE PURCHASED FOR THE PURPOSE OF REDEMPTION (v.14).

A. The Holy Spirit is God's down payment and our guarantee, our earnest, or our foretaste of God's heavenly promises.

Here in verse 14 "Paul adds a further analogy: The Holy Spirit is a 'deposit'....

This word is borrowed from the commercial world and means a deposit or first installment in hire purchase. It is a token payment assuring the vendor that the full amount will eventually follow. Paul regards the Holy Spirit as the first installment of the Christian's inheritance. At the end of the age God will redeem his pledge and open the treasures of heaven to all who are in Christ.

Meanwhile, the Spirit gives us the assurance that these things will one day be ours." (Wood, Barker & Kohlenberger 754)

B. The price for our salvation was paid, thus making us God's possession.

I Peter 1:18-19

"Knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver and gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot."

C. Therefore, our faith and God's provision come together for the glory of God.

God has chosen the act of redemption as the means by which He glorifies His name. As He is glorified for His works of grace and mercy, He is presented to the world as the Great Redeemer.

Christ will return one day for us as the Great Redeemer of those who have been purchased by His precious blood. He paid the price that we could not pay and one day He will receive the glory and honor that He deserves. Christ is the Redeemer of the purchased possession!

CONCLUSION

However, the work of redemption is not complete until the possession has been completely redeemed. We are the purchased possession of our God. Our souls have been redeemed from sin. Our lives are being redeemed as we become more like Christ. But our redemption is not complete until Christ returns and we become like Him. These are the reasons we await the return of Christ with great anticipation!

The work of redemption and the anticipation of the day of reunion between the redeemer and the redeemed is beautifully illustrated in the true story of an Ethiopian slave named Tigyne.

Tigyne belonged to the Wallamo tribe in interior Ethiopia. In the years preceding World War II, missionaries carried the message of Christ to this Satan-worshipping tribe. One of the early converts was Tigyne. Raymond Davis was the missionary who knew him...and freed him.

Tigyne was a slave. His decision to follow Jesus displeased his master, who refused to allow Tigyne to attend Bible studies or worship. He frequently beat and

humiliated Tigyne for his faith. But it was a price this young Christian was willing to pay.

There was another price, however, he could not afford. He couldn't purchase his freedom. For only twelve dollars his master would release him, but for this slave who'd never known a salary, it might as well as have been a million.

When the missionaries learned that his freedom could be purchased, they talked it over, pooled some money, and bought his freedom.

Tigyne was now free -- both spiritually and physically. He never outlived his gratitude to the men who had redeemed him.

Soon after his day of liberty, the missionaries were expelled from Ethiopia. Twenty-four years passed before Raymond Davis returned to Wallamo. During this quarter of a century Tigyne remained a vivid testimony to the power of freedom. He longed to see Davis again.

When he heard that his friend was coming, he went to the mission station several days in a row to wait. Dates on the calendar or time on the clock had no significance for Tigyne so he came daily to search for Davis.

Finally, Davis arrived, riding in a car driven by a fellow missionary.

When Tigyne saw the vehicle come around the corner, he ran to the window and took Davis's hand and began to kiss it again and again. The driver slowed the car so Tigyne could run beside it. As he ran he yelled to his friends, "Behold! Behold! One of those who redeemed me has returned!"

Finally the car stopped. Davis got out and Tigyne dropped to his knees, put his arms around his friend's legs, and began to kiss his dusty shoes. Davis reached down to bring him to full height and they stood with their arms around each other and wept. (Lucado, 212-13)

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