**The Church at Corinth**

**A Church Facing Inner Problems – #7**

**Christ is Our Redemption – Part 1**

**1 Corinthians 1:30-31 Continued**

*Parts 2 and 3 of this lesson- another 8 pages or so – are available on the website at georgebebawi.com, or via email from Bob upon request at* *rlwcom@aol.com**.*

***1 Corinthians 1:30*** *It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, righteousness and sanctification and* ***redemption****,* ***31*** *So that, as it stands written, “Let the one who would boast, boast of the Lord.”*

**Perfect Person vs. Ill-Advised Concept – A Warning**

Once more, we face the problem of making or rather changing the Person of Jesus into a concept(s). Our human aim behind this change is to understand and also to build our relationship on our understanding. This is not evil or bad, but it has three weaknesses:

1. Concepts define our relationship according to our understanding of these concepts and keep our relationship frozen because we use them according to our own mental abilities.
2. Concepts are basically our mental definitions of what we know and that in itself is good but definitions do not take on board the depth of the personal relationship where love is our communion with God the Father in his Son. Both this love and such a communion go beyond concepts, words and definitions. Putting it another way, words, concepts and definitions are less than the relationship itself, because we are not related on the level of our human relationships to each other by words or concepts but by the personal knowledge that normally transcends words.
3. More important is the fact that Jesus is a Person, or rather, is *the* Person who came to redefine by his Person all that we knew about God and humanity, revealed through his teaching that is his life and all his Personal action(s) that rooted and shared with us in his life.

**The English New Testament as a Noble Way of Commination**

## *Commination (def.) = 1. A threat of punishment or vengeance; 2. A denunciation; 3. (in the Church of England) a penitential office read on Ash Wednesday in which God’s anger and judgments are proclaimed against sinners.*

##  *–source, dictionary.com*

The English NT has been a great blessing to millions of Christians. But like many things in life, it has been misused by fanatics who fortify themselves as breakaway groups of believers who love to dispute and fight, or by some who consider all others are wrong and they are the only true faithful Christians who argue from the NIV or other translations. Behind all these groups is the misreading of the New Testament itself in English only and avoiding going back to the Greek and the Hebrew to learn how we have inherited multiple ways of expressing the truth of Jesus by using multiple words.

Some of these words come from the customs of the old civilization, others come from the LXX that is the OT Greek translation made by the Jews of Alexandria and was forbidden by the Jews in the 6th century A.D.

Christianity is a New Covenant between God the Father and humanity. It was not founded on the Law of the Old Covenant. There are some Christians who like to harness the Gospel and put it all under the Law of the OT, Thus Jesus becomes no longer the Mediator Son of God because, simply, Jesus is not the Law nor did He came to preach the Law, but to bring the Law to its fulfillment – to its goal that is its end. This is what Paul himself says: “*Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.*” (Gal 3:23-25)

**Jesus is God-Incarnate**

We have to remember all the time that Jesus is God-Man. He belongs to our humanity and to God, but he came to heal and to redeem our humanity. His life is not just human like all other human life, but is unique and different from our life. His message is unique and this uniqueness must be maintained and not to be dragged down to the common use of words and concepts that are loaded by our human habits of talking and thinking to the extent that his unique union and communion with the Father is either forgotten or even lost.

Jesus’ death was not like our death, and certainly his sacrifice on the cross supersedes those sacrifices of the OT (Heb 10:1-10). His death was and is the death of the Savior, thus what is unique about his death must not be covered up with our concepts and the use of our ordinary words such as “price” or “payment.” The depth of the divine love is both a divine work and a personal work of the Trinity. This divine love is the life of Persons of the divine Trinity where work and person are the same reality.

This divine revelation is not like the OT revelation. The Uniqueness is that the revelation of Father-Son-Holy Spirit was not communicated by words but by the Person of the Son who revealed to us the Father, and the Person of the Holy Spirit who revealed to us the Son. In the Spirit we know Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3). To live this revelation is the only way to understand it, or to put it in other words is to be in communion with Christ in the Holy Spirit. If we lose site of this we lose the entire teaching that is about the Persons, not about a method or system that can be discovered by a group of words.

This divine love does not work nor manifest itself according to the normal human fallen love, where we love those who love us. Jesus warned us not to love like sinners who love those who love them:  “*You have heard that it was said, “You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect*.” (Matt 5:43-48)

What is unique is how the Person of Jesus used words to establish a new relationship of communion with the divine life of Father, for Jesus came to make us once more the children of God (John 1:12-13). This relationship supersedes the ordinary human relationship. Our birth from above is neither from human origin nor by human will, nor is it a product of human marriage. This is what John tried to tell us (John 1:12-13), but we like to impose our legal terms and our human ways of thinking on this divine relationship of communion of life thus leaving – and often missing – the transcendent higher love.

**Splitting Language: Of Persons, Concepts and Sectarianism**

It is very easy to discover the meaning of any Greek words today. We have the great work of Gerhard [Kittle’s Theological Dictionary of the New Testament](http://www.bible.ca/trinity/trinity-Kittel.htm) (10 volumes) and others who helped us since the Reformation by putting into our hands the use of the Greek words used in Classical Greek writings prior to the spread of the Gospel, the Greek of the LXX, and the fathers of the church (by G W Lamp, *A Patristic Greek Lexicon*).

Discovering the meaning of any Greek word should be done in the light not only of its history but also its place in the relationship that was revealed in the God-Incarnate Jesus Christ. Words function not according to the dictionary alone but also according to their use in the relationship.

**‘Redeem’ in Greek 1 - AGORADO**

We have group of words in both Hebrew and Greek that were used to translate the verb “redeem” and the noun Redeemer.

1. To redeem in Greek, ***agorado***, means “to buy.” It is included in Matthew 13:44, 46; 14:15; 21:12; 25:9, 10 – seven times. In all these verses it was used for buying in the ordinary sense but never for God or Christ.
2. It was used in Mark five times: (6:36, 37; 11:15; 15:46; 16:1), meaning the same as in Matthew, “to buy.” It is in Luke six times (9:13; 14:18,19; 17.28; 19.45; 22.36)
3. It was used three times in John (4:8; 6:5; 13:29), with the same usage, “to buy.”

**Metaphorical Use in First Corinthians:**

1. 6:18-20: *Shun fornication! Every sin that a person commits is outside the body; but the fornicator sins against the body itself. Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? For you were* ***bought with a price****; therefore glorify God in your body.*
2. 7:21-24: *Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. 23You were* ***bought with a price****; do not become slaves of human masters. In whatever condition you were called, brothers and sisters, there remain with God.*

There is no mention at all of the death of our Lord when these verses say, “*bought with a price.*” It is very clear that God is our owner. There is no buyer or a price according to these verses, and to insert the blood of Jesus is to mutilate the verses, because …

1. The body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and that means it is dedicated to God this is clear in verse 19. Before that Paul says in verses 12-18 that sexual immorality in alien to our union with Christ: “Do you not know that your bodies are members of Christ? Should I therefore take the members of Christ and make them members of a prostitute? Never! 16Do you not know that whoever is united to a prostitute becomes one body with her? For it is said, “The two shall be one flesh.” 17But anyone united to the Lord becomes one spirit with him” Then comes the metaphor to enforce that sense of belonging and dedication in verse 20, you have been “bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body” the passive voice does not allow us to seek either the price or the byer because both are not in the verse and the whole passage is about union and belonging to God as his temple and as his property. Although commercial use is behind the use price but the new revelation has changed the meaning to the personal relationship of union and ownership.
2. 1 Corinthians 7:23 is not about a Master who pays the fine in court to release a criminal who can’t pay but is saying to Christians, “Were you a slave when called? Do not be concerned about it. Even if you can gain your freedom, make use of your present condition now more than ever. For whoever was called in the Lord as a slave is a freed person belonging to the Lord, just as whoever was free when called is a slave of Christ. You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of human masters.” Paul stands against the Roman Law saying that if you are a slave you are a free person in the Lord. But if you are a free person you are a slave of Christ. Behind this is the fact that Christ freed us from sin and death and owned us. Paul is more than happy to call himself the slave of Jesus Christ (Rom 1:1) at the beginning of his letter the great capital of slave trading in the old world.

**Metaphor in 2 Peter**

Another metaphorical use appears in 2 Peter 2:1), “*But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive opinions. They will even deny the Lord who redeemed them—bringing swift destruction on themselves.*” The use of the title “Lord” is for God, and God does not pay a price because God owns all his creation.

**The Song of the Redeemed**

In Revelation 5:9-10, the song of the saints, says, “*They sing a new song: ‘You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals,for you were slaughtered and by your blood you redeemed us for God from every tribe and language and people and nation; you have made them to be a kings and priests serving**our God, and they will reign on earth.*”. “To pay by his blood for God” does not say that “He offered his blood to God.” It is once more about being redeemed to be owned by God and it is still a metaphor like the verses in 1 Corinthians and 2 Peter.

**‘Redeem’ in Greek 2 - EXAGRADZO**

The second verb is ***exagradzo*** and is used four times in the NT. The verb was translated in the English NT “to redeem.”

(Gal 3:13-15) *“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’— in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”*

Christ liberated us from the curse of the Law, that is, by his death, as it is clear that to be hanged on a tree was the execution under the Law in the OT. Jesus did not die according to the Law of the OT because the Law never demanded the death of the Son of God or the death of the holy for sinners. Jesus is God and man in one Person. He is the one who gave the Law to Israel and this Law or any other Law did not prescribe his Incarnation. So also his death, for there is no Law that says the holy one must or even may die for the sinner. To undo the “curse” Jesus died to put an end to the Law as the means of justification, which is Paul’s main argument in the Letter to Galatians.

**Redeeming Time**

Ephesians 5:14-15 – *See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise,*

*redeeming the time, because the days are evil.*

Time can be redeemed by being used wisely. The same meaning appears in Colossians 4:5. This is certainly goes beyond the commercial meaning of the “redeem.”

**‘Redeem’ in Greek 3 – LUTRO**

Another Greek verb, ***lutro***, is used three times (Luke 24:21, Titus 2:11-14, 1 Peter 1:18).

1. In Luke 24:21, the two disciples on the road to Emmaus said to Jesus, “*But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel*.”
2. In Titus 2:11-14, when we read the whole passage, we arrive at the right understanding of our Great God and Savior Jesus Christ: “*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly, while we wait for the blessed hope and the manifestation of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He it is who gave himself for us that he might redeem us from all iniquity and purify for himself a people of his own who are zealous for good deeds.*” To redeem us from all iniquity is the inner work of Jesus in every sinner that is directed to the sinners “to purify” them rather than to help God to get rid of his anger. It is the revelation that the grace of God has appeared (verse 12) bringing salvation to all of us and it is not the byproduct of the Law but “*the great love of God who is rich in mercy*” (Eph 2:4).

**‘Redeem’ in Greek 4 - LUTROSIS**

From the verb *lutro* we have the noun Redemption, ***lutrosis***. It was used three times in the Greek NT and was translated as Redemption in Luke 1:68; 2:28; Hebrews 9:11-12.

1. In Luke 1:68 “*Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke this prophecy:  ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for he has looked favorably on his people and redeemed them. He has raised up a mighty Savior for us*.’” The same meaning was also in Luke 2:38 in the words of Anna, the daughter of Phanuel. She came and began to *praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem*.”
2. Hebrews 9:11-12 has been a major problem for many sects for it deals with the sacrifice of Jesus in the same breath with his priesthood. Jesus entered the heavenly sanctuary, that is heaven alive, to offer his blood because he is the God-Man, “*But when Christ came as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and perfect tent**\** *(not made with hands, that is, not of this creation), he entered once for all into the Holy Place, not with the blood of goats and calves, but with his own blood, thus obtaining eternal redemption.*” The comparison with the OT sacrifices must not be lost, for the eternal redemption is not just an action that can be seen apart from the Eternal Redeemer. Here this is presented in temple terms not as court terms of trial. *“Eternal redemption”* in verse 12 is the new relationship where we are taught in verse 14 that “*how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit**\** *offered himself without blemish to God, purify our**\** *conscience from dead works to worship the living God*.” Purification is one of the redeeming works of Jesus as the High-priest.

**‘Redeem’ in Greek 5 – APOLUROSIS**

From the same verb we have also ***apolutrosis*:** redemption- used once in Luke 21:28,

“*But when these things begin to take place, straighten up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.*” From the context, your deliverance is near.

We see this word in Romans 3:24, “*being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus*.” Our redemption is in Jesus, it is in him as a Person and it is by him as an action without a split. If we change this divine act to a concept the whole declaration that it is an act of grace will be lost, because grace opens our union and keep us in Christ rather than keeping us in our minds and locked into our concepts.

We see it again in Romans 8:23, “*And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body.*” The redemption of our bodies is the resurrection on the last day. Here redemption is liberation from mortality.

Then we see it in Ephesians 1:7, 14 and 4:30. 1:7 “*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace.*” By writing “*in him*” all concepts are rolled out. “*Through his blood*” is the Hebrew way of saying “*through giving up his life.*” The last words “*according to the richness of his grace*” do not allow anyone to use any forensic terms to explain our redemption. Legalism must fall down at the feet of Jesus, that Jesus came to pay or to buy or to take the wrath of God the Father on himself.

**The Holy Spirit: The Pledge and the Seal of our Redemption**

Ephesians 1:13-14, “*In him you also, when you had heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and had believed in him, were marked with the seal of the promised Holy Spirit; this is the pledge of our inheritance toward redemption as God’s own people, to the praise of his glory. Who is given as a pledge of our inheritance, with a view to the redemption of God's own possession, to the praise of His glory.*”

The “Spirit” is the pledge of our inheritance to the praise of his glory; the Spirit is given as the gift of our divine redemption. This was overlooked by sects, who center their teaching on the death of Christ, and leave out the Holy Spirit who formed the body of Jesus and anointed him, and declared him the Messiah. This should be read with Ephesians 4:30 – “*Do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.*” That is, the day of our resurrection.

Colossians, 1:12-14, “… *giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light. He has rescued us from the power of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of his beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.*”

Once more in Christ we have our liberation and the deliverance from our sins that is marked by being transformed to the kingdom. We were rescued to be transformed. The “beloved Son” can’t have been changed to a “curse” but was seen as a “curse” by those who hanged him on the wood of the cross.

**‘Deliverance From’**

This Greek noun for Redemption is a compound word composed the Greek preposition "*apo*" [from] and "*lutrosis*" [loosing or deliverance] and means "loosing from" or "deliverance from."

Redemption is not just forgiveness. It is more than forgiveness of sins; it is also deliverance from death; it is the resurrection of the dead. Forgiveness of sins is not enough; we need to be made alive to God because we are dead, (Rom. 5:12; I Cor. 15:21-22). So the forgiveness of a man's sins does not take away death because death was caused by man's sins (1 Cor 15:22). Redemption is our resurrection from the dead and is also salvation from our mortal life. Thus to be made alive to God includes forgiveness of sins according to Colossians 2:13 and Ephesians 2:4-8.

**Colossians 2** “*But God who is rich in mercy, out of the great love with which he loved us 5even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ**\***—by grace you have been saved— 6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. 8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9not the result of works, so that no one may boast. out of the great love with which he loved us*

***Ephesians 2*** *5even when we were dead through our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ**\***—by grace you have been saved— 6and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, 7so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus. 8For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God— 9not the result of works, so that no one may boast*”.

The power words are in fact the power of what has been revealed in Christ:

1. That God is God, who is rich in mercy.
2. It is out of his great love with which he loved us even when we were dead through our trespasses.
3. God made us alive together with Christ.
4. It is the divine grace not the Law by grace you have been saved.
5. God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, so that in the ages to come he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness towards us in Christ Jesus.
6. For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God.
7. This was not the result of works, so that no one may boast.
8. Let forensic terms fall down at the feet of Jesus.

**Conclusion**

1. The words of the NT do not allow us to fall back on the Late Middle ages prior to the Reformation to the penal justice of God or to the payment to God the Father. Such concepts were created taking no notice of the unity of the Godhead of Trinity. Sects had resurrected Nestorian Christology that treated the human nature of the Son Incarnate without any consideration to the unity of his divinity with his humanity. The divine acts of Jesus all took place in his flesh and blood but the power to liberate and to change is the divine power of the Son who is in the Father.
2. By reading the words of Paul (Col 2: 13, Eph 2:4, Rom 6:1ff) we can repeat these words of the 4th century St Athanasius that the Son accepted our death in his humanity to remove it completely from the human nature and to unite us in the Holy Spirit to his Person so that what has taken place in his humanity is shared with us. This is a summary of St Athanasius’ book On the Incarnation.

**A Critique on “Ransom”**

Let’s make a relatively brief critical examination of the word “ransom” in the light of the clear declaration that Jesus is our Redemption. Two Greek words were used for one English word “ransom” in the NT: ***antilutron*** and ***lutron***.

1. **ANTILUTRON**

In 1 Timothy 2:5-6, “*For there is one God; there is also one mediator between God and humankind, Christ Jesus, himself human, who gave himself a ransom for all—this was attested at the right time.*”

1. It is impossible to believe that Jesus came to save us from God’s wrath because Jesus is one with the Father and to say that the offering was only his humanity is to split the one person into two – one person active in giving himself that is his humanity, and the other person passive that is his divinity. The main problem here is that it becomes very clear that the sacrificial love of the Son is merely human. See John 10:14-18), “*I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15just as the Father knows me and I know the Father. And I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it up again. I have received this command from my Father.*” The hidden blasphemy is that “saving us from God’s wrath” basically denies the unity of the Godhead and the one love the Father and the Son have for humanity. It also amounts to a denial to this free divine “I” that Jesus received from his Father which gave him the Jesus the freedom to give up his life for “the world.”
2. To say that Jesus ransomed us from a wrathful Father is to deny John 3:16.
3. **LUTRON**

*Lutron* was used in Matthew 20:26-28 and Mark 10:45, which is the saying of our Lord Jesus Christ: *“Whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many”*

1. Ransom here is not a price form there is another Greek word for price, ******(*time*) is used three times in the Greek NT: Matthew 27:9; 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23. None of these verses were used for our “redemption.” The saying of Jesus is directed to those who want to be first and great in the kingdom, but Jesus says that he came to serve as a slave and in this context Jesus is the slave who came to liberate the salves of death and sin.
2. Paying a ransom to the Father denies that the Son is the co-creator with the Father. The Son owns creation with the Father. Moreover a ransom, if it is not an act of liberation and freeing us then as a payment, means that sinners are not in fact justified by grace but by a payment. So God the Father who accepted a “price” from his Son for our sins, such a teaching does not reveal that ransoming is an act of grace.
3. Sinners cannot become possessors of the righteousness of God as result of appeasement or the price or exchange of the sinners’ place with the Son, because God the Father and God the Son have the same righteousness and the payment would split the Trinity (John 10:30).
4. Sinners who are counted as having the Righteousness of God, the Holy God, who has one and the same Holiness of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, cannot become the Righteousness of God except by an act of infinite love and mercy that come from the Three Persons.
5. Sin cannot divide the One and undivided Trinity, and that means not only as a matter of simple logic, but also in the light of the great apostolic proclamation that nothing can separate us from the Love of God in Jesus Christ our Lord (Romans 8:39). Consequently, nothing can separate the Father from the Son, in particular on the cross, which put an end to our separation. No one should imagine that the end of our separation from God came as a result of a separation of the Son from the Father, because the Son is in the Father, and that God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, and this last word “himself” proves not only the presence of the Father in the Son on the cross, but also that the Father was there to put an end to all forms of separation.
6. It is written in the Letter to the Hebrews: ‘Jesus also suffered outside the city gate in order to sanctify the people by his own blood” (13:12). Dedication by his blood is what is missing from a payment to God the Father, but being freed and dedicated is what the power of life that is the blood of Jesus can give us.

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