

January 1

Scriptures: Read Ephesians 1

Key Verse: “In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace...” (Ephesians 1:7)

Overview

The Concise Oxford Dictionary defines the word “redeem” this way:

1. Buy back, recover by expenditure or effort or by stipulated payment
2. Perform (promise)
3. Purchase the freedom of (another, oneself), save (one’s life) by ransom
4. Save, rescue, reclaim (of God or Christ), deliver from sin and damnation.
5. Make amends for, compensate, counterbalance, save from a defect (“the eyes redeem the face from ugliness”).

Key words in this definition are, “buy back,” “purchase the freedom of,” and “save.” These words imply that someone or something has been sold, enslaved, and earmarked for destruction. And a further implication is that the selling, enslaving, and destroying has occurred in a closed system where that someone or something has fallen short of some declared purpose or standard. Who has fallen short here? And whose standard has been transgressed?

Paul says the fallen ones are the Ephesian believers (and all believers of all time), including himself and his co-workers. And the standard marker is none other than God Himself. From God’s point of view, righteous and holy as He is, man is totally filthy in his sin and fit only for destruction. His justice demands a penalty for man’s sin — and that penalty is death. But, in His grace, “He has blessed us... in Christ” (v. 3). Christ’s blood has been shed to atone for our sin; He has forgiven us and has indwelt us with His Holy Spirit as a guarantee of our heavenly inheritance (v. 14). We have been bought back, set free, and made new. We have been redeemed.

Prayer

Lord, today it is a great joy to pray the prayer of the Apostle Paul. We read together, prayerfully Ephesians 1:16-23.