

## **Christ Ransomed Us from Death**

Let us turn to our Bibles, the Holy Writ, to Hosea 13, 14. Hosea 13, verses 14. We're almost done with this book.

Let us listen attentively to the Word of God. Hosea 13, verse 14. I will ransom them from the power of the grave.

I will redeem them from death. O death, I will be your plagues. O grave, I will be your destruction.

Pity is hidden from my eyes. Let us pray. Father, Lord, God, as we as your children gather this evening, pray for more illumination and ask God that our hearts would be rejuvenated anew on this, your day, and hearing of the Word of God, especially here as we dig into the doctrine of the theology of ransom, of Christ using his life and death as a ransom for us from death, Lord, to save us from the consequences of our own sins.

And may this, Lord, drive us to more humility, more love, and more adoration of you, we pray. Amen. In this amazing set of verses, the saving of God's people from the death of death and the grave itself, we have deep theological truth.

In particular, we have a key word in the Bible about how God will deliver his people from the consequences of sin. That word here is ransom. I will ransom them from the power of the grave.

We may think of crime shows and the need to gather enough money to ransom or buy back the victim from the criminals. But that's, of course, a particular circumstance that's not the same as what we have here, although somewhat parallel. It's always good to relearn these things if you've heard it before, or to learn it anew if you've not heard it before.

So I will drill down into this important truth to better illuminate our minds with the great salvation that we have in Jesus our Redeemer. Another similar word to ransom. I will first explain the word and its usage in the Bible before tying it explicitly to our salvation that I'll call more broadly the atonement.

### **Salvation as Ransom**

You'll see why in a bit. Salvation as ransom. One way to describe what is being done to bring you to heaven is this key word ransom.

It means to achieve the transfer of ownership from one to another through payment of a price or an equivalent substitute. Or maybe very simply to buy back. Sometimes it's used that way.

Ransom. We know this word. We don't use it very often, but it's there in our life.

It's used 69 times in the Old Testament. Sometimes it's translated redeemed. That's why sometimes the word redeemer is another word for ransom or ransomer.

We would say it's kind of an awkward way of speaking. To redeem or buy us back. Or deliverer or deliverer.

Deliverer as a noun or delivered as a verb. There's other ways you can go with this Hebrew word. Since the idea of exchange is at the heart of this definition.

Transfer through payment or an exchange of something from one to the other or an equivalent substitute of some sort. This movement. So that being the heart of it, we'll see in the second point that it's also another way of describing salvation in general as well.

It includes the idea of transferring an equivalent or a substitute. And Jesus is what? Our substitute. And his life and his death for us.

Originally used to describe an economic transfer such as slaves in some of the case laws there in Leviticus 19 for example. And also used in other ways in 1 Samuel of how we think of it in this text. 1 Samuel 14.45 and following we read of Jonathan.

He was redeemed by his people. That is he was redeemed or rescued from death. No money was actually exchanged there.

But he was protected and preserved nevertheless. Also used very early on in the theological sense. Like English, the Bible uses human language.

So simple words like redeemed can be used in multiple ways. One is economical like I mentioned with slaves. Another is a dangerous circumstance in which Jonathan was preserved.

And here more precisely in the theological sense or spiritual or moral sense. The death of the firstborn from the 10th plague over Egypt on that faithful night was an exchange for the Israelis release of their people. Mentioned later in the description to the children in Exodus 13 about the Passover from Egypt.

And it came to pass when Pharaoh would hardly let us go that the Lord slew all the firstborn in the land of Egypt. Both the firstborn of man and the firstborn of beast. Therefore I sacrificed to the Lord all that opened the matrix being males but all the firstborn of my children I redeemed.

So there the idea of ransom is already used in a theological or ceremonial sense here with respect to the Passover. Exodus 13 is them describing what is going to happen at the time and explaining to the children. The Old Testament usage beyond these particulars we have especially here in the ceremonial idea of Exodus 13 some more I think even more relevant I hope for you to understand this important theological concept.

Ceremonial usage that is to say God has given the church of old from the time of Adam till today certain outward forms or actions that you do. We call it ceremonial. You may not think of baptism or the Lord's Supper as ceremonial but they are.

They are not Old Testament ceremony. That's true. It's a New Testament because the greater revelation we have in Christ Jesus and the significance they have that's deeper than they had in the Old Testament.

But they are ceremonies nevertheless. The offerings and the sacrifices that Adam's children did. Those are ceremonies as well.

God said do it. This is a way of worshiping me, of expressing truth as well and pointing to the Savior as we know. Especially we see this idea of ransom or redeeming, buying back in the book of Exodus and the book of Leviticus.

The book about the priest although not exclusively about the priest. Where people and even animals the first born were redeemed or bought back. The significance of the first born is supposed to be the first that is the best that you had.

They were all ransomed often translated in your Bible as redeemed. Because of course a similar word to buy off, pay off, clear by payment or exchange. We do this I remember as a kid there in Arvada, Colorado.

I can walk a couple blocks to the arcade and you would take your quarter and get a token. You can redeem the quarter for a token or take that token and redeem it for a prize or something like that. That's the mechanical idea of it.

It was clearly given to the Old Testament church. This whole elaborate ceremonial system especially the redemption or the buying back of the animals and the first born to teach them an important lesson. How Christ as the Lamb of God would what? Ransom us.

Take our place. This was most graphically displayed in the great day of atonement. We read this in Leviticus chapter 16.

Leviticus chapter 16 most that chapter there is taken up with this great grand theme. The great day of atonement was only once a year. That by the great high priest and that into the holy of holies.

A special time and that was it. But also other things were happening during the great day of atonement. Leviticus chapter 16 verse 8 and following we read.

Then Aaron shall cast lots for the two goats. One lot for the Lord and the other lot for the scapegoat. Verse 9 and Aaron shall bring the goat on which the Lord's lot fell and offer it as a sin offering.

So there you have that another idea about redemption, a sin offering. But verse 10 takes us another direction. But the goat on which the lot fell to be the scapegoat shall be presented alive before the Lord to make atonement upon it and let it go as the scapegoat into the wilderness.

So you have the sacrificing of the animal to the Lord as a sin offering and here you have a scapegoat. That atonement is also being put upon and of course ceremonial not really as though an animal satisfied God's divine wrath. Of course not.

In either case. Two things are happening at once. The scapegoat here as we know literally the origin of scapegoat that we use today to what? Blame another.

You see already the language and the name of the animal itself is telling you something is going on here significant. Something significant. It's taking the blame of someone else.

Of something else. And so in verse 21 you continue down in Leviticus 16 you read Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over all the iniquities of the children of Israel and all their transgressions concerning all their sins putting them on the head of the goat and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land and he shall release the goat into the wilderness.

What is going on there? But we're told as I read there in verse 21 what he is doing. Again it's ceremonial it's just an outward way of expressing a moral spiritual truth. And what are those moral spiritual truths? It's there in the language all the iniquities.

It's very emphatic right? All the iniquities, all the transgressions, all their sins. That's three different words. On the head of the goat.

And Aaron does it right? The great high priest. And he's not just laying hands on the live goat. He's leaning on it to make it emphatic.

The goat shall bear on itself their iniquities. And so the scapegoat takes what? The blame of another. It's an exchange or a ransom for God's people.

A substitute. A transfer. An exchange.

That's what's going on by action. That's what's going on by description. And the signification of that event.

It seems almost a complete picture of redemption. Although again split they get the offering and the killing of the goat. And over here the goat sent off into the wilderness.

Both expressing beautiful truths of what Christ was going to do in the future and has done for us right here and now. Two thousand years ago. But there's more ways to explore this picture of ransom or redeeming.

Negatively we read about it in Psalm 49 for example. Psalm 49 verses 6 and following. Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother nor give to God a ransom for him.

For the redemption of their soul is costly and it shall cease forever. Those who trust in their wealth of course are in sin. He doesn't use the word sin but that's clearly what's going on.

They boast in the multitude of their riches. That's clearly a problem. But they cannot be redeemed by man.

You can't help them expunge their transgressions. You can't what? Buy them back nor give to God a ransom for him. Because it's a very costly thing indeed.

You can't accomplish it for others. You cannot save other people. If you can't save others you can't save yourself.

You can't redeem them. Your soul is just as precious or costly as he says here. It shall cease forever.

You just can't do it. It's just so costly it's never going to get done by man. Who can save them? Well we know who can save.

Who can redeem something so costly as a soul that we cannot put wealth upon? What's your soul worth? How much money? Are you willing to sell your soul to the devil? None, I hope. Positively, Psalm 130, verse 7 and following, Psalm 130, verse 7, and following, O Israel, hope in the LORD, for with the LORD there is mercy, and with him is abundant redemption. And he shall redeem Israel from all his iniquities.

Ransom Israel from all his iniquities. God can do it. He can redeem that costly soul.

Your costly soul. And He did through Christ Jesus. Explicitly tied here to iniquity.

Iniquities and sin. So it's not like a New Testament doctrine. Oh no, where did this come from? It's clearly there in the Old Testament.

It's always there. And of course our text, where it goes a little further and more revelation in the Old Testament. I will ransom them from the power of the grave, which is to say death.

That's the power of grave. Death itself He will ransom us from because death, of course, is the consequence of sin, of transgressions, of violations of God's most holy law that all of mankind have fallen into, the fall of Adam. New Testament usage of the word.

There is explicit usage of the word a few times in which the Greek is kind of a little more precise at times compared to the Hebrew. But a few verses here I want to read that gives us the idea without the word. And this is important so we don't lose sight of the fact that the right doctrine can be found in the text, although you might not have that explicit word.

It's just clearly the concept is there. Galatians 1.4. Christ who gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us from the present evil age according to the will of our God and Father. Gave us for our sins is clearly what? Take our place and exchange a ransom for us.

To deliver us from the present evil age. What's the present evil age but another way clearly of talking about Satan's kingdom. A ransom from Satan's kingdom.

2 Corinthians 5.21. This one is a little more explicit and also detailed with respect to the exchange here. 2 Corinthians 5.21. For He made Him that is Jesus who knew no sin to be what? Sin for us. That we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

That's the divine exchange in which we have the righteousness, the perfection of Jesus imputed to us that is judicially declared in God's law courts by faith alone. You're innocent. You're not just innocent the judge declares with the gavel, but I'm declaring you perfectly righteous with respect to the law of God as though you had done it yourself.

But I didn't. I know. Christ did it for you.

I did everything opposite. I know. It doesn't matter.

The judge sent his own son to die to be your advocate. Another word for lawyer. Old word for lawyer, right? In your stead as a ransom.

That's the idea. All these ideas overlapping. Different words saying the same thing.

It is explicitly worded in Matthew 20. Jesus himself describes himself this way. He says, just as the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life a ransom for many.

We only have one verse in the Bible to tell us how it is that God saves His people. What exactly is going on here? We know it's not simply God says, well, you're just saved. Just forget about it.

You're saved. He doesn't do that. He has to uphold His holy law.

He doesn't just ignore His law. He's not an arbitrary dictator. That's what some people think God is like.

Some of the liberals are kind of going that way. They'll call us terrible. What's this atonement of blood? What kind of bloody religion? They would tell us.

Sometimes they say that today. Clearly we're told this, the blood of Christ, and even more explicitly here that His life is a ransom. He gave it up willingly in our stead to buy us back from Satan's kingdom.

Use that extended picture there. So this verse is enough to tell us that His work for us wasn't just a divine example. Some people taught this.

You have this in the Second Great Awakening. People like Charles Finney and others were playing around with the atonement. They denied original sin.

That's going to affect everything else in your idea of salvation. So how Christ can save you if there's no original sin? One way is the divine doctrine of government in which He's just a great display of God's really serious about justice. Well, okay, that's great.

And you killed your son for that? What happened from it? Nothing happened. He didn't do anything. He didn't accomplish anything.

He didn't actually die in your stead. A ransom to purchase, morally speaking, that is the ransom. He obeyed the law in your stead and died in your stead.

He denied that. It's called the governmental theory of atonement, and it's a heresy. What you also get from Matthew 20, not only did He say this, I'm a ransom, with clearly all that imagery of the Old Testament of the scapegoat in particular and others, but He did it willingly.

It wasn't forced upon Him, brothers and sisters. He wanted to do this for you. And then we have Paul himself in 1 Timothy 2, verse 6, where he describes Jesus who, quote, gave Himself a ransom for all to be testified in due time.

Peter writes this way as well. In 1 Peter 1, verse 18 and following we read, knowing that you're not redeemed, ransomed, bought back, with corruptible things, like silver and gold, as though God cares about gold, or, okay, I'll take some gold and I'll release you from hell. What? Just saying it's ridiculous.

Of course not. From your aimless conduct received by the tradition of your fathers, but with not redeemed with incorruptible things, but redeemed with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot. There's the Old Testament imagery there again, the sacrificial system clearly pointing to Jesus and showing us through outward means and methods, tangible, what it means of the spiritual reality that we are redeemed by the precious blood of Christ, who is a lamb without blemish and without spot.

He was perfect, morally perfect. God, the only way God would redeem, buy us back, is with the precious, incalculable blood of Christ. It's more precious than our soul, because it's infinite.

And so we, going through some of the verses here, see the usage, as well as the doctrine coming out more clearly in the New Testament setting. What was implicit with some explicit language, but lots of it, again, is manipulation and imagery and using of animals. Here it's what we call didactic, or just straight on teaching, like you do in school.

This is what it is. It's a ransom, and it's a ransom, and what he's using is his own life. The precious blood of Christ, of course, is a picture of his life and his death, his death in particular, that he gave up that life to die in your stead. You were supposed to die. He ransomed you by dying in your stead.

## **Salvation as Ransom and Atonement**

Salvation as ransom and atonement. So the use of the word here again, ransom, as I mentioned before, sometimes describes the entire act of God saving people, saving his people as such, and so in those cases sometimes the word redeemed is used in English

translations. Other times it's more precisely the actual act of the great exchange that he is in our stead, your stead, and that's what I especially focus on in the opening verses here. Now I want to tie that explicitly to the work of Christ, what I'll call the atonement.

You can use other names for it. That he lived and died for your salvation. The atonement is the broad category of how you're saved, when Christ atoned for your sins.

What does that mean? What does that look like? The atonement sometimes is described that word as at-one-ment, so it's the idea, broadly again, of being reconciled with God and Christ. So it's not only just, you're just saved. What does that look like? It's more particular, well, through his atonement, that is, the reconciliation of two parties, one of course broke it, not God, we did.

They are reconciled to God in Christ, or through the work of Christ. Then you ask again, the third layer of detail, what does that really look like? The ransom. Sometimes you talk about the third, and you're kind of talking, that's how language works.

You move back and forth between the layers at times, and all kinds of things. It's rendered divine, he rendered divine satisfaction for the judge of the universe, and he did it through himself, that is, as a substitute for sinners. The ransom idea takes on greater clarity when we understand, like Isaiah 53.6, he bore our iniquities.

In the other verses I read, as well as here, I will ransom them from the power of the grave, by his own life, and of course the scapegoat in Leviticus 16, highlighting what is going on with what Christ does. And in fact, as you can only do through imagery and ceremonial law, Christ is both the goat being sacrificed to God for the atonement, over here, and then the scapegoat being sent out to the wilderness to take the blame. All the sins are blamed upon Jesus Christ, all our sins.

Judicially speaking, not personally, he didn't sin. As our representative, that is, our ransom, our substitute. And that's described as a vicarious or substitutionary atonement from vicar, one who substitutes or represents another.

Now, what is the cause of the atonement? What brought it about? You? Man? I just read that psalm, I think it was 49, that you can't redeem another man's soul. It's costly. No way you could pull it off.

You can't satisfy God with another man's sin, cover their sin somehow, buy him off, or just be perfect and good enough for him. You can't do it. You wouldn't even start to do it, because those who have fallen in Adam don't care about being saved.

That's what we have to realize. They care in one sense, just like the kid who gets caught with the cookie jar. I got caught.

No one likes that. But they'd do it again if they could do it. The unbeliever would never initiate this.

He doesn't want to go to heaven. It's not a place for him. God initiated it is the point.

God's love in Christ, Isaiah 53.10. Yet it pleased Jehovah to bruise him, his only son. He hath put him to grief, when thou shalt make his soul an offering for sin. He shall see his seed, and he shall prolong his days, that the pleasure of Jehovah shall prosper in his hand.

Divine ransom, your deliverance from the power of Satan, and sin and death, is because God wanted to save you. He initiated it. He's the cause of the atonement of your salvation.

Colossians 1.19.20. For it was the good pleasure of the Father that in him shall all the fullness dwell, and through him to reconcile all things unto himself, having made peace through the blood of the cross. It pleased the Father. Again, of old, and I suppose it's still true today in some liberal circles.

I don't mean that politically, I mean theologically liberal. And they're thinking it was like the Father's an angry God, and Christ came along, and it's okay, I'll take care of him. No, he is an angry judge towards our sins, but he also decided to be our Father, and to save us.

He initiated it. That's the point. How is the atonement accomplished? Well, I already mentioned that a little earlier.

We believe in what's known as the vicarious or substitutionary atonement or ransom, which is denied by a number of sects of Christianity, unfortunately. Mark 10.45, we read for the Son, also came not to be ministered unto, but to minister and to give his life a ransom for many. So, clearly an exchange.

That's the word there. I read that before. And again in 2 Corinthians 5.21, him who knew no sin made to be sin on our behalf.

That is, he took our grief as the scapegoat and ransomed us from sin and Satan. All of which points to, in other verses as well as we know, he died for you or in your stead, in your place. That's what the word instead, we hear, well I did this instead of that.

I did it in place of that, is what you're saying. The word instead, in your place, in your position, as your divine advocate. That's what Christ does, and it's called a ransom.

He bought you back with his own blood. And it's not just his own blood, although that's often emphasized. And for one obvious reason, because it's so terrible and dramatic and horrifying thought.

Someone died when you should be dead, and he suffered when you should have suffered. That sticks with you. That's part of the price of the atonement.

That's part of the price of what? The ransom. What's the ransom price? And they say, I want a million dollars, or I want you to free my fellow terrorist, or something like that. Here the ransom price for the judge of the universe was the death of his only begotten son.

But not just the death, but his life as well. Matthew 15, 17, think not that I came to destroy the law or the prophets, Christ tells us. I came not to destroy, but to fulfill.

He also told John the Baptist that. I should be baptized to fulfill all righteousness. As though Jesus wasn't perfect already? Why did he need to be baptized? He did it in your stead.

He did it for you. He obeyed the law for you. Galatians 4, 5, but when the fullness of time came, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that he might redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

So he obeyed the Ten Commandments in our stead. That's part of the ransom price, his death as well as his life. And God received the ransom.

There's confusion on this as well. I remember growing up kind of confused about this. Ransom, I kind of thought, you know, criminality, and we're buying off Satan.

I don't understand. We're going to give Satan the blood of Christ and people are saved from that? And I can appreciate that, but that's not what's going on. The devil and his kingdom, he is but the jailer or the warden.

And you don't pay off the warden. That is, to have divine justice satisfied, you don't pay off the warden. What do you satisfy? You dissatisfy the judge of the universe.

God received that ransom so that you are no longer judged, brothers and sisters, and kept in that prison with Satan as your jailer. But he has redeemed you by the blood of his Son and his life as well from everlasting damnation if you trust and believe in him. For we didn't sin against Satan, we sinned against God.

And that's why ransom, although that's what happened, should be taken in that direction, like you remember in the shows. We go to the criminal and pay off the criminal. That's not what's going on.

Hebrews 9.14, How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal spirit offered himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God? He offered himself and purged your conscience, and his blood is what redeems us. Christ redeemed his people by ransoming his life and his death for them, for you, brothers and sisters, and he freed you from Satan's kingdom and eternal death itself. If indeed it is true for you, and I hope it is, that you have turned from your sins and trusted in Christ, who is your ransom, let us pray.

Father God, it is amazing to see that, yes, you are or were our judge. You were going to bring full condemnation, and we were condemned in Adam. And yet, in spite of that, you've chosen to save your people, to become their father, by sending your son, that you would satisfy the divine justice therein for the ransom of the precious blood of Christ Jesus, our Lord and Savior.

Father God, may this be true for us, may this be true for others in our lives, and may we point to Jesus and explain these things as needful, so that others can be brought into the glorious kingdom of our Lord and Savior. By his ransom blood we pray. Amen.