

OSS Redemption

We have been studying OSS and all the things God did for us for our salvation. To review, we first noted that before we came to faith, through God's foreknowledge and election, and in harmony with our free will, God chose us for faith, and in so doing predestined us for adoption as his sons and daughters, to be conformed to his image, and to dwell with Him forever with eternal life.

We then pivoted and began our studies of what happened at the moment of faith. In other words, what did God do for us when we said and confessed "Jesus is Lord and I believe." We looked at the conversion of Zacchaeus and learned how God calls us, regenerates us, and how he leads us to repentance and faith. Zacchaeus also illustrated a corollary of repentance which was restoration, or the attempt to make things right with those whom we have wronged as an outward sign of true conversion.

From Abraham we learned the concepts of righteousness and justification. Or in simple terms, how through faith, God credited to Abraham His righteousness, and therefore was able to justify Abraham and declare him right before Himself.

We then went to Leviticus 16 and learned the principles of substitution, imputation, atonement, and propitiation. Fancy words that mean through Christ, God took our place of judgement on the cross (substitution). That there our sins were transferred to Christ (imputation), that he paid an adequate price (atonement), and that God was satisfied with it (propitiation).

Today we will address another theological concept that occurs at the moment of faith and that is redemption. Again, another big theological word that we will define through a Biblical example. So, please turn with me to Hosea 3.

I am going to go on a small rabbit trail, but I do think it helpful. When you think of all the OT prophets, you can easily classify them into three broad categories according to the empires and times at which they existed.

- a. The Assyrian age: Roughly 760-722BC. Note the Northern and Southern Kingdoms are both intact, so during this time, there are prophets who address the Northern Kingdom (Amos and Hosea), those who address the Southern Kingdom (Isaiah and Mica) and one who address a foreign power (Jonah).
- b. The Babylonian age: Roughly 640-530BC. Note that the Northern kingdom no longer exists, so there are only prophets who address the Southern Kingdom (Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Jeremiah, Daniel, Ezekiel) and foreign powers (Nahum).
- c. The Persian age: Roughly 520-430 BC. Note neither the Northern nor Southern Kingdoms exist. The prophets thus write to the exiles and returnees (Haggai, Zechariah, Joel, Malachi) and one foreign power (Obadiah).

Thus, Hosea was an OT prophet who addressed the Northern Kingdom during the Assyrian period, but before the Assyrian take over in 722 BC. He was sent to the Northern Kingdom to warn them of impending doom if they would not repent and confess their multiple sins of idolatry.

In Hosea 1 God asks Hosea to go marry a prostitute. And just as Hosea was to marry a prostitute who goes from man to man, God wanted to show the NK (Northern Kingdom) that He had married a nation

that went from idol to idol. Hence Hosea and his marriage, was a visible sign of the spiritual marriage God had with Israel.

So, in chapter 1 God goes and tells Hosea to marry a prostitute, not the first thing I would expect God to tell me as a prophet. Then he tells Hosea to start a family with her. When I get to heaven, it will be an interesting question to ask Hosea, “so how do you go about finding a prostitute to marry?” Very intriguing question that maybe we should just leave for now. But Hosea finds Gomer and marries her. Soon they have a son, and God tells Hosea to name him *Jezeel, for I am about to punish King Jehu’s dynasty to avenge the murders he committed in Jezreel* (1:4). Then Hosea and Gomer have a daughter whom God commands him to name *Lo-ruhamah-not loved-for I will no longer show love to the people of Israel or forgive them* (1:6). Then they have another son whom God commands Hosea to name *Lo-ammi-not my people- for Israel is not my people and I am not their God* (1:9).

Note, each child’s name has prophetic significance and is a message to the people.

Then in chapter 2, God tells Hosea to bring charges against Israel for her harlotry. Note vs 2 and the first part of 3, *But now bring charges against Israel—your mother—for she is no longer my wife, and I am no longer her husband. Tell her to remove the prostitute’s makeup from her face and the clothing that exposes her breasts. ³Otherwise, I will strip her as naked as she was on the day she was born.* God is saying to Hosea to rebuke Israel (the NK-your mother), and tell her I (God) am no longer her husband. God is telling the NK He has divorced her. Further if she does not abandon her adulterous ways, he will strip her naked so all can see her shame. This is further noted in verse 9 and 10, *I will take away the wool and linen clothing I gave her to cover her nakedness. ¹⁰I will strip her naked in public, while all her lovers look on.*

Then mid-chapter, God discusses winning her back and wooing her once again as her true husband in verses 14-16, *But then I will win her back once again. I will lead her into the desert and speak tenderly to her there. ¹⁵I will return her vineyards to her and transform the Valley of Trouble^[b] into a gateway of hope.*

She will give herself to me there, as she did long ago when she was young, when I freed her from her captivity in Egypt. ¹⁶When that day comes,” says the Lord, “you will call me ‘my husband’. Now hold this thought for now.

Then we get to chapter 3. Now understand the context; while Hosea is confronting the nation with God’s message of returning to Him from her idolatry in chapter 2, Gomer leaves him and commits adultery with another lover. Hos 3:1-3, *Then the Lord said to me, “Go and love your wife again, even though she^[d] commits adultery with another lover. This will illustrate that the Lord still loves Israel, even though the people have turned to other gods and love to worship them.^[b]” ²So I bought her back for fifteen pieces of silver^[d] and five bushels of barley and a measure of wine.^[d] ³Then I said to her, “You must live in my house for many days and stop your prostitution. During this time, you will not have sexual relations with anyone, not even with me.*

Note there are many lessons here. First, love is an act of the will. Second, that though adultery is a reason to divorce, it does not mean divorce has to happen. But our focus is not on these, rather it is on the fact that Hosea purchases her. What is that about? There were three reasons why one might be in slavery in the ancient world; either you were a conquered people and forced into it, or your parents were slaves, and you were born into their family which made you a slave, or lastly, you sold yourself into

slavery as a form of employment. In other words, you could sell yourself to pay off a debt or to work off a debt, or other obligation. Your time was owned by someone else until your debt was paid.

Verse 1 notes, *Hosea is to go and love your wife again, even though she commits adultery with another lover*. The word lover here means she was loved by another man. We are not told how this relationship began. However, because Hosea had to pay a price for her, it can be assumed she had proffered or sold herself so that Hosea had to pay her debt (see 2:5, *Their mother is a shameless prostitute and became pregnant in a shameful way. She said, 'I'll run after other lovers and sell myself to them for food and water, for clothing of wool and linen, and for olive oil and drinks.*"). Now note the price in 3:2, *So I bought her for back for 15 pieces of silver with 5 bushels of barley and a measure of wine*. The 5 bushels and the measure of wine were together worth about 15 more pieces (some translations have shekels) of silver. Ex 21:32 notes the cost of a slave was 30 silver coins. So, it is apparent by the price Hosea paid, Gomer was now a slave and had sold herself for the necessities of life as noted in 2:5. It is also interesting to note Hosea paid in both silver and barley. Why not just all silver? Numbers 5 tells us that if you suspected your wife of infidelity, you were to bring her to the priest where he would then give her a drink made of barley, dust, and water. If she were innocent and she took the drink nothing would happen; but if guilty, her womb would wither, and her belly would swell. Hosea knows his wife is guilty of adultery, so he pays for her in the currency of her guilt which was the barley.

Also note that when someone was purchased it was often a public affair. The slave was taken to the auction block and then stripped (whether male or female) so you knew what you were buying. This is the allusion to chapter 2. Most likely, when Hosea bought her back, she was publicly displayed at auction and stripped, just as Israel was stripped in chapter 2, thus unveiling and exposing her sin and shame.

So, to summarize, here is the picture; while Hosea is preaching in chapter 2, his wife seeks another lover, sells herself, and becomes a slave. Hosea is commanded to go and love her and purchase her back, which he does for a combination of silver and barley, and pays the slave price which is a total of thirty pieces of silver. She is most likely purchased at auction, where her nakedness and shame are exposed, just as God exposed Israel in chapter 2. She was thus a living picture to the nation of her own idolatry and what God would do.

This purchasing from slavery is the idea behind the theological concept of redemption. Redemption means to deliver by paying a price: it is freeing from bondage. Gomer was in bondage to her prostitution and seeking other lovers. Hosea purchased her out of it. In NT times, the term redemption was understood as being freed from the slave markets of the Roman world (it is estimated that up to a third of the population of the Roman Empire in the first century were slaves).

Paul uses the imagery of a slave and the example of the Roman slave markets to illustrate our bondage to sin in Romans 6. Paul tells us that before we came to faith, sin was our master, and we were its slave. As Rm 6:6 notes, *For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with that we should no longer be slaves to sin—⁷ because anyone who has died has been set free from sin*. He also notes in verse 14, while discussing our new life in Christ, *For sin shall no longer be your master, because you are not under the law, but under grace*. Prior to salvation we did what our old nature commanded us. As Eph 2:1-3 reminds us, *As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins,² in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.³ All of us also lived*

among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh^[a] and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath.

Paul says we were all in the slave market of sin and Christ came to purchase us out of it. Biblically the death of Christ is represented as paying a ransom. Mt 20:28 says, *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.* Mk 10:45 says, *For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.* Christ's death was the purchase price to get us out of sin. 1 P 1:18-19, *For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect.*

I am going to give you one more thought with this redemption picture. As in Hosea's time, and in Roman times when a slave was purchased, he or she was naked on the auction block. Everything is exposed. In Gomer's case, she was not only stripped naked, but her sin and shame were on full display.

Metaphorically God was exposing the sin and shame of Israel. Here is the point; we as slaves to sin, had our sin and shame exposed on the auction block of faith. We could see ourselves as naked and sinful. And here is the beautiful thing. Christ purchases us with the price of his blood, removing us from the slave market of sin; he then cleanses us with forgiveness, clothes our nakedness with his righteousness, and does not leave us as a slave, but makes us a part of his family as his son or daughter.

Paul thus concludes in Rm 6, *I am using an example from everyday life because of your human limitations. Just as you used to offer yourselves as slaves to impurity and to ever-increasing wickedness, so now offer yourselves as slaves to righteousness leading to holiness.²⁰ When you were slaves to sin, you were free from the control of righteousness.²¹ What benefit did you reap at that time from the things you are now ashamed of? Those things result in death!²² But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves of God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life.²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in^[b] Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Christ came to purchase us, with the price of his blood (1 P 1:18-19), out of the slave market of sin, and set us free from its bondage. A few last points to note:

- a. Redemption is all due to God's grace, Eph 1:7, *In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace* (see also Ps 130:7-8, Is 41:14, 48:17, 49:26).
- b. Redemption is through Christ, Gal 3:13, *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.* (see also Job 19:25).
- c. The goal of Christ's incarnation was the redemption of man, Tit 2:14, *who gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good* (see also Gal 4:4-5).
- d. Having been freed from Sin, we now live to please a new master: 1 Cor 6:19-20, *Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own;²⁰ you were bought at a price. Therefore, honor God with your bodies.* (see also Rm 6).