

Redeemed: Once and Always

For you were bought with a price... (1 Corinthians 6:20a)

Having completed our study of the book of Ruth with a theme of redemption, we will now take several weeks during this Eastertide and focus on what it means to be redeemed. Christians may talk about it, sing about it, rejoice at the truth of it, but not understand what it means. In addition, it seems to also beg the question, “Redeemed for What?” Is there a purpose in my redemption beyond a ticket to Heaven? Truly there is!

Recall that Boaz redeemed both the field of Elimelech, and Ruth, the Moabite. There was a transaction, this for that. Boaz was qualified (as a kinsman) willing to pay the price. Jesus Christ, son of God, fully human and fully divine, was qualified to be the one to redeem us – to be our redeemer. God sent Jesus to redeem us out of immeasurable love for us. But why did we need to be bought or purchased? Considering what Jesus said on the cross at the end of his suffering will help answer this question. Jesus said, “*It is finished.*” (John 19:30) So what is finished?

Tetelestai

Tetelestai is the Greek word that has been translated into English with the phrase “It is finished.” Jesus would likely have uttered the single word, “*Tetelestai.*” In biblical times, this word was used in a business transaction, stamped across a bill, to indicate a debt had been paid in full. Nothing more need be paid. In a legal sense, it was written across a judgment, “*tetelestai,*” to indicate that the sentence had been fully served, with no further penalty ever to be exacted again for that crime. In a military sense, *tetelestai* would mean the battle has been won, the victory secured. What then does all this mean related to our redemption in Christ?

- ❖ Jesus paid the debt owed because of our sin. Adam Hamilton writes, “Sin leaves us indebted to the one who we have sinned against.” We pray, “*Forgive us our debts...*” Our sinfulness leaves us/left us indebted to God, the only one altogether holy and righteous. God in the flesh, Jesus, paid the debt for you and me, never to pay again. *Tetelestai.*

- ❖ Jesus satisfied the judgment and penalty of our sin under the law, ...*erasing the record that stood against us with its legal demands.*” (Colossians 2:14) *Tetelestai!* Jesus came into the world and died “*in order to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as children.*” (Galatians 4:5) No longer is there a legal requirement for us to act in a right way, but rather we act in a right way BECAUSE the judgment for sin has been satisfied out of love for us. Yes, it is always about love!

- ❖ Jesus won the battle, conquering sin and death. “Where O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting? But thanks be to God, who gave us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.” (1 Corinthians 15:55-56) That battle is won, and never need be fought again! *Tetelestai.*

One last point on this beautiful Greek word. “*Tetelestai* is in the Greek perfect sense, meaning that the action was completed in the past but has a lasting permanent effect.” That makes sense given what we just covered. The debt is paid, the judgment satisfied, the victory won – and that will ALWAYS be the case. Forever!

The writer of Hebrews makes this point clear.

But as it is, he has appeared once for all, at the end of the age to remove sin by the sacrifice of himself. And just as it is appointed for mortals to die once, and after that the judgment, so Christ, having been offered once to bear the sins of many, will appear a second time, not to deal with sin, but to save those who are eagerly waiting for him. (Hebrews 9:26b-28)

Reflect:

- How does knowing the Greek word, *Tetelestai*, and its meaning deepen your understanding of what Jesus accomplished through his death?
- As a result of the lesson and especially the scripture that’s been shared, how might you now better understand what it means to be redeemed?
- The Apostle Paul declares that we “have been bought with a price.” Dietrich Bonhoeffer said in his book, The Cost of Discipleship, “That which cost God much cannot be cheap for us.” What do you think he meant by this?