

THE FINISHED WORK OF CHRIST ON THE CROSS

There are three major aspects of truth in New Testament doctrine relative to the benefits provided for the unsaved through the death of Christ on the cross. Each of these aspects of truth is expressed by one word and some synonyms of each one.

The three words are: *apolutrosis*, translated *redemption*, *katallaga*, translated *reconciliation*, and *hilasmos*, translated *propitiation*. The riches of the grace of God these three words represent, in reality, transcend human thought and language, but these truths must be communicated, be the communication ever so limited.

There are at least four other words – *forgiveness*, *regeneration*, *justification*, and *sanctification* – which define other spiritual blessings secured by the death of Christ, but these should be distinguished from the three mentioned above in one particularly important respect: these four words refer to aspects of truth which belong only to those who are saved.

On the other hand, the three words – *redemption*, *reconciliation* and *propitiation* – though incorporating vital truths belonging to the saved, refer in particular to that which Christ gained for the unsaved in His death on the cross. What is identified as *the finished work of Christ* could be defined as the sum total of the doctrines of these three words.

Redemption

Relates to the relationship which exists between the sinner and his sins. This word sees sin as slavery, with the sinner as the slave, and freedom from this slavery is to be found only through the redemption, or ransom, secured by Christ on the cross (John 8:32-36; Romans 6:17-20; 8:21; 2 Peter 2:19; Galatians 5:1).

Reconciliation

Relates to the relationship which exists between the sinner and God. This word identifies the sinner at enmity with God, and Christ as the One who makes peace between God and man (Romans 5:10; 8:7; 2 Corinthians 5:19; James 4:4).

Propitiation

Relates to the relationship which exists between the sinner and God, but *propitiation* refers more particularly to the necessity of God being just when He justifies the sinner, and to Christ as an Offering, a Sacrifice, a Lamb slain, Who renders God righteously *propitious* toward the sinner (Romans 3:25; 1 John 2:2; 4:10).

To sum up, redemption is the *sinward* aspect of the cross, reconciliation is the *manward* aspect, and propitiation is the *Godward* aspect.

As to *redemption*, there is the aspect which is represented by the word *agoradzo*, translated *redeem*, which means to purchase in the marketplace, but it does not indicate a release from slavery. The word *exagoradzo*, also translated *redeem*, implies much more, in that *ex*, meaning *out of*, or *out from*, is combined with *agoradzo*, and thus indicates that the slave is *purchased out of the marketplace*. The terms *lutroo* and *apolutrosis* are even stronger terms, indicating *to loose*, *to deliver*, *to set free*. There then is a redemption that *pays the price*, but does not necessarily *release* the slave, as well as a redemption which is unto abiding freedom, as found in both *lutroo*, and *apolutrosis*.

According to 2 Corinthians 5:19, there is a *reconciliation* which is world-wide, wrought wholly of God; yet, in verse 20 the individual sinner has the responsibility, in addition to the universal reconciliation, to be reconciled himself to God. What God has accomplished through His Son has so *changed* the world to Himself that He is satisfied with Christ's death on the cross as the solution to the sin question for each individual. The desired end is not reached, however, until the individual is also satisfied by faith with that same work of Christ which has satisfied God as the solution to his own sin question.

Thus there is a reconciliation which of itself saves no one (2 Cor.5:19), but which is a basis for the reconciliation of any and all who will believe. When a sinner trusts Christ for salvation, he then is reconciled essentially and eternally, becoming a child of God through the riches of His grace.

According to 1 John 2:2, God declares that there is a *propitiation* for our (Christians') sins, and not only for our sins, but also for the sins of the whole world. The same twofold aspect of truth – that which is applicable to the unsaved and that applicable to the saved – is true here in the case of propitiation as it is with redemption and reconciliation.

Prepared by:

Vince Morris

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Twofold Application of the Benefits of Calvary:

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<u>Redemption</u> : to purchase in the marketplace upon faith (1 Cor.6:20; 2 Pet.2:1)	to set believer free from the marketplace (Rom.3:24; Eph.1:7; Col.1:14)
<u>Reconciliation</u> : applied to unsaved world (2 Cor.5:19; Rom.5:10)	applied to individuals upon faith (2 Cor.5:18,20,21; Rom.5:10)
<u>Propitiation</u> : applied to unsaved world (Heb.8:12; 1 Jn.2:2)	applied to individuals upon faith (1 Jn.2:2; 4:10)