

Three “Rs” Of Christ’s Death
February 5, 2017
II Corinthians 5:14-21
The Lord’s Supper

“God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself, not imputing their trespasses unto them; and hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation.”
II Corinthians 5:19

In American English, “the 3 Rs” is a metaphor for basic, elementary curriculum: reading, writing and arithmetic. These comprise the foundation of all learning, and are therefore the educational starting point.

The starting point for every soul’s acceptance by God is the death of Christ. Whereas God’s plan of redemption was authored before time, yet the first (and only) place to look for salvation is Christ’s crucifixion. Among the benefits that flow from that sacrifice are three fundamental events, which we cite today as “the 3 Rs” of Christ’s death. His death was:

I. A Reconciliation: Scripture teaches that “when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son” (Romans 5:10). We were “without strength,” “ungodly,” “sinners” and “enemies” (5:6-10), without any hope for acceptance with God or deliverance from His judgment. But these conditions were removed when Christ offered His body as a sacrifice for our sins. Thereby He reconciled believing sinners unto God.

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; and having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven. And you, that were sometime alienated and enemies in your mind by wicked works, yet now hath he reconciled in the body of his flesh through death, to present you holy and unblameable and unproveable in his sight” (Colossians 1:20-22).

II. A Ransom: Ransom is the price paid to liberate a slave. Jesus warned, “Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (bond slave) of sin” (John 8:34). The whole creation is in “the bondage of corruption” (Romans 8:31). “The Apostle Paul instructed Timothy to meekly instruct sinners, “that they may recover themselves out of the snare of the devil, who are taken captive by him at his will” (II Timothy 2:26). Christ came to “deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage” (Hebrews 2:15).

Jesus said, “The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Matthew 20:28). He taught, “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:36). Christ’s death was a ransom paid to liberate from spiritual enslavement; enslavement to the world, the flesh and Satan.

III. A Redemption: The distinction between “ransom” and “redemption” is this: the ransom is the price that is paid—Christ giving His life a ransom for many. Redemption is the work accomplished by that payment. To redeem is to recover ownership. It speaks of Christ recovering His own (Luke 1:68; 24:21), those who were given to Him by God the Father (John 17;

Ephesians 1:4). By His death, the ransom was paid, and Christ redeemed unto God all who will ever be delivered from the penalty of sin.