

Redemption: from Genesis to Revelation

1. First mention: Genesis 48:16 a Hebrew term for deliverance
2. The Exodus (Ex. 6:6, then 15:13, etc.) was called "redemption": Israel was in slavery and a price was paid to set them free. This demonstrated that redemption involves freedom through the payment of a price. The death angel came, and they only escaped because of the death of the lamb, the ransom price in their place. This demonstrated that redemption involved a substitute sacrifice to avoid death.
3. The Passover was instituted as a celebration of redemption (Exodus 12).
4. Because the firstborn were spared when they should have died in Egypt, God claimed the firstborn as His own. Though the firstborn should be offered to God because they are His, He allowed a redemption price to be paid for some of them (unclean animals and humans), but the firstborn sacrificial animals had to die. This demonstrated a key principle: you are redeemed or you die. There are no other options. (Exodus 13:1-16, 22:29-30, 34:19-20, etc.)
5. In the Mosaic Law, God unexpectedly provided a means of escape to spare the life of Israelites who committed offenses that the Law said were guilty of death: a redemption price could be paid in some situations so that the guilty person could live (Exodus 21:28-30; Numbers 35:31; Proverbs 6:35).
6. In two difficult passages in Exodus 30 and II Samuel 24, a redemption price is demanded by God at the census or for soldiers in the army. Again the two options were clear: either a ransom price was paid to God, or death came.
7. In Leviticus 27, God graciously allowed them to pay a redemption price to buy back something that they vowed yet later needed. This reconfirmed the concept that redemption was a substitute to purchase the freedom of something else.
8. The "kinsman redeemer" first appears in Leviticus 25, where a redeemer could pay the price to buy back a family member's house, land, or even a person who had sold himself to labor for someone else. This demonstrated the importance of a redeemer willing to pay a price in costly love for someone else. In Leviticus 25, Deuteronomy 25, and Ruth, we learn that the kinsman redeemer must be 1) a blood relative, 2) able to pay the redemption price, and 3) willing to pay the redemption price.
9. In Ruth, Boaz is a God-fearing kinsman-redeemer who is not only qualified and able, but also willing to make the sacrifices necessary to redeem Elimelech's land and preserve his reputation and progeny. This exemplifies the qualifications of the redeemer.
10. In Numbers 5, Numbers 35, Deuteronomy 19, and Joshua 20, the kinsman redeemer takes upon himself the concern for the just treatment of his family, acting as an avenger not only for his family but for the purity of God's land.
11. Job expresses his confidence that he has a redeemer who will stand on the earth in a future day, and Job will literally see him after death (Job 19:25-27). This is probably the earliest personal application of the redeemer concept in the Bible.
12. David knew that no people were so privileged as those whom God chose to redeem (II Samuel 7:18-24). In the Psalms, "Redeemer" becomes a common title for God. Psalm 49 demonstrates that the redemption price for a soul is priceless - no one can afford it.
13. Redemption is a major theme in Isaiah, as God is very frequently referred to (or refers to Himself) as "Redeemer." He shows the people their sin, separation from God, the sacrifice for their sin, and their hope because they have a Redeemer.

14. Through Hosea God demonstrates that redemption is necessary because of the power of death, and warns that He will not redeem those who refuse to turn to Him (Hosea 13).
The New Testament expands upon the slavery that demands redemption: sin chains people to corruption and defilement, futility, darkness, a terrible master, and a curse. (II Pet. 2:19, I Pet. 1:18-19, Col. 1:13-14, Acts 26:18, II Tim. 2:26, Titus 3:3, Heb. 2:14-15, Gal. 3:13) It describes our debt as impossibly, unimaginably large (Matthew 18:21-28), a hand-written document of debt that speaks to our condemnation (Col. 2:13-14).
16. When Jesus came, He said that He came to "give his life a ransom for many" - thus claiming to be the redemption price (Matt. 20:28). In Christ all of the foreshadows come together. He is the substitute, sacrificial lamb of the Exodus and the Passover; the firstborn who dies in our place; the avenger of blood who takes upon Himself the justice of His family and the purity of God's land; the kinsman redeemer who is the only one who is qualified (because of His full deity and humanity), the only one who is able (His very costly blood, like that of a spotless lamb, is the redemption price), and also willing to give His life in love. He is the Redeemer and the means of redemption in Isaiah, and the reason why Paul can take Hosea's frightening words and use them to taunt death.
17. Two particular results of redemption are sonship - God bought us to be in His family - and ownership - God bought us to be His (Gal. 4:4-7; I Cor. 6:20, I Cor. 7:23, Revelation 5:9).
18. Romans 8:18-23 teaches that God has redeemed us for a final redemption that we are still awaiting. Our bodies are still sin-cursed; we still live in a sin-cursed creation; we have not yet been liberated from decay and suffering; and so we are waiting for the part of redemption which we have not yet experienced, the spectacular physical redemption of our bodies and of the creation. When we experience all of redemption with the redemption of our bodies and of the creation, we will also experience all of sonship, being glorified with the Son Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the guarantee of this redemption: a portion that whets our appetite and guarantees the whole. (Romans 8:23; II Corinthians 1:20-22; 5:5; Eph. 1:13-14, Eph. 4:30).