

1 Peter 1:18-19

¹⁸ 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 you inherited from your forefathers, ¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot.

Berean Study Bible

¹⁸ You understand
that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold
that you were redeemed from the futile way of life
you inherited from your forefathers,
¹⁹ but by the precious blood,
of a lamb unblemished and undefiled;
of Christ.

My own translation

1

Cost vs Value. 1 Peter 1:18-19

High cost. Low value. 1:18a “perishable”

Low cost. Low value. 1:18b “empty”

High cost. High value. 1:19 “precious”

2

Try this IQ test. 1 Peter 1:18-19

Smart people understand the value of things. 18a “perishable things”

Smart people understand the value of direction. 18b “way of life”

Smart people understand the value of choice. 18c “inherited”

Smart people understand the value of faith. 19a “Christ”

Smart people understand the value of life. 19b “unblemished and undefiled”

3

Increase the value of your wealth. 1 Peter 1:18-19

Warning: it may be illegal to offer investment advice if you are not so qualified.

Increase the value of what you already have. 1:18a

Knowledge comes in head or heart. Get the best. “understand”
Wealth comes in hand or heart. Get the best. “not with perishable”

Increase the value of what you are getting. 18b

Select the value of your income stream. “futile way of life”

Select the best from your income stream. “from your forefathers”

Increase the value of what you are becoming. 19

Grow your understanding of value. “precious”

Grow your understanding of yourself. “Christ...”

4

You have a valuable inheritance. 1 Peter 1:18-19

The inheritance you received. 1:18b

Your inheritance may be a financial asset. “such as silver or gold”

Your inheritance may be a spiritual liability. “futile way of life”

The inheritance you pass on. 1:19

The inheritance you pass on must be valuable. “precious”

The inheritance you pass on must be pure. “...and undefiled”

5

Want to buy a slave? 1 Peter 1:18-19

Old Testament slavery vs secular slavery.

How much to buy a slave. 18a “gold”

The reason to buy a slave. 18b “redeem”

How to become a slave. 18c “inherit”

How to redeem a slave. 19 “precious”

Other possible titles

What are you worth?

Would anyone die for you?

How are you gonna pay for that?

Life in the pawn shop.

Music and songs

Songs about Christ's redemption

Consider Christ. Ot 2
In Christ alone. Ot 4
My Redeemer is faithful and true.
My Redeemer lives. MiS 13
There is a Redeemer. SiS 644

Songs about being redeemed

Forgiven (Blankenship & Red). Ot 78
Forgiven (David Meece).
Redeemed, I love to proclaim it... His child and forever I am.
Redeeming love.
Rejoice, Rejoice Christ is in you. SiS 614
Sweet is the song... I'm redeemed by love divine. Glory, glory, Christ is mine.

Songs about precious

Lord, You are more precious than silver. 430
Nor silver nor gold hath obtained my redemption. H 720

Songs about Christ's blood

Christ has for sin atonement made. H 631, v2
Have you been to Jesus... Are you washed in the blood? H 640
It's Your blood that cleanses me. 566
Not all the blood of beasts on Jewish altars slain. H 160
There is a fountain filled with blood. H 153, H 694
What can wash away my sin? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. H 705
Would you be free... there's power in the blood. H 715

Commentary

The first word in **1 Peter 1:18** is οἶδα [Strong's 1492] which means "to see", and is translated as "to know", hence knowledge gained by awareness; perception; insight; understanding; appreciation. This concept comes into English in the expressions: "I see what You mean"; "I see what you are saying."

οἶδα, meaning knowledge by understanding, is different from γινώσκω [Strong's 1097] which means knowledge gained by doing, or by first-hand experience.

Both forms of the word "know" are very common in 1 & 2 Peter, and in the New Testament. The accompanying document, Introduction to 1 & 2 Peter, shows details.

λυτρόω [Strong's 3084] meaning "release by paying a ransom, to redeem, release on receipt of ransom, set free by paying the full ransom, restore something back, into the possession

of its rightful owner, rescuing from the power and possession of an alien possessor". A verb occurring 3 times in the New Testament, Luke 24:21, Titus 2:14, and **1 Peter 1:18**.

The cognate noun, λύτρον [Strong's 3083] meaning "the purchasing money for manumitting slaves, a ransom, the price of ransoming, the ransom-money, the liberty-price freeing slaves from bondage". There are 2 occurrences in the New Testament, Matthew 20:28, and Mark 10:45.

Another cognate noun is λύτρωσις [Strong's 3085] also meaning "the payment of the full ransom-price to free a slave, the redemption of a slave from bondage, ransoming from imprisonment for debt, liberation, deliverance, release. There are 3 New Testament occurrences, Luke 1:68, Luke 2:38, and Hebrews 9:12.

λυτρωτής [Strong's 3086] meaning "a redeemer, liberator, deliverer, one who liberates, one who releases a captive". Found only in Acts 7:35.

Theological reflection

"...you were redeemed..." 1 Peter 1:18

Why do we need to be redeemed?

We needed to be redeemed because of what we were.

34 Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a **slave to sin**. 35 Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. John 8:34-36

...you are **slaves to sin**, which **leads to death** ...you used to offer yourselves as **slaves to impurity** and to **ever-increasing wickedness**... Romans 6:16, 19

We needed to be redeemed because of where we were.

In Him we have **redemption** through His blood, **the forgiveness of our trespasses**, according to the riches of His grace, Ephesians 1:7

He gave Himself for us to **redeem us from all lawlessness** and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. Titus 2:14

Who redeemed us?

Truly no one can ransom another, or give to God the price of his own life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice... Psalm 49:7-8

God will ransom my soul from the power of Sheol, for he will receive me. Psalm 49:15

This is the beautiful irony of the Gospel. We are saved by God from God.

What was the ransom that redeemed us?

...it was **not with perishable things** such as silver or gold that you were redeemed... **but by the precious blood... of Christ.** 1 Peter 1:18-19

For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to **give His life as a ransom** for many. Mark 10:45

To whom was the ransom paid?

Option A – to a person (Adam, priest)

You were redeemed from the futile way of life you **inherited from your forefathers.** 1 Peter 1:18

Truly **no man can ransom another**, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice... Psalm 49:7-8

Option B – to Satan

No way is the death of Christ a negotiation with Satan or a payment to Satan. When Christ meets the demonic forces in his ministry, they don't say, "Did you bring the money?" He commands and they go. No negotiations. (John Piper)

He disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Him. Colossians 2:15 ie. total defeat, no negotiation.

There is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus... 1 Timothy 2:5 ie. Jesus mediates between God and Man; not God and Satan; not Man and Satan.

Option C – to God

Truly **no man can ransom** another, or give **to God the price of his life**, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice... Psalm 49:7-8

There is one God, and there is **one mediator between God and men**, the man Christ Jesus, who **gave himself as a ransom for all**, which is the testimony given at the proper time. 1 Timothy 2:5-6

From what are we redeemed?

Anyone who tries to please God by obeying the Law is under a curse. The Scriptures say, "Everyone who doesn't obey everything in the Law is under a curse."... Christ **redeemed us from the curse of the law** by becoming a curse for us... Galatians 3:10, 13a

To what are we redeemed?

¹⁶ Don't you know that when you offer yourselves to someone as obedient slaves, you are slaves of the one you obey—whether you are slaves to sin, which leads to death, or to obedience, which leads to righteousness? ¹⁷ But thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you have come to obey from your heart the pattern of teaching that has now claimed your allegiance. ¹⁸ You have been **set free**

from sin and have become slaves to righteousness. ¹⁹ 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 Christ Jesus our Lord. Romans 6:16-23

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men. ¹² It instructs us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live sensible, upright, and godly lives in the present age, ¹³ as we await the blessed hope and glorious appearance of our great God and Saviour Jesus Christ. ¹⁴ He gave Himself for us to **redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify** for Himself a people for His own possession, **zealous for good deeds.** Titus 2:11-14

⁹ And they sang a new song: “Worthy are You to take the scroll and open its seals, because You were slain, and **by Your blood You purchased** for God those from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. ¹⁰ You have made them **to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God**, and they will **reign upon the earth.** Revelation 5:9-10

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 tree.” ¹⁴ He redeemed us **in order that the blessing promised to Abraham would come** to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might **receive the promise of the Spirit.** Galatians 3:13-14

⁴ But when the time had fully come, God sent His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵ to **redeem** those under the Law, **that we might receive our adoption as sons.** ⁶ And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying out, “Abba, Father!” ⁷ So you are no longer a slave, but a son; and since you are a son, **you are also an heir** through God. Galatians 4:4-7

¹⁹ Do you not know that your body is a temple 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, **glorify God with your body.** 1 Corinthians 6:19-20

Biblical instructions regarding slavery (overly brief)

Israelite slavery was voluntary. “Whoever steals a man and sells him, and anyone found in possession of him, shall be put to death.” Exodus 21:16. This forbids anything resembling a slave trade among the ancient Israelites.

Any passage that speaks of masters as “buying” Hebrew servants should be understood as referring to a voluntary act, in which the slave was not sold by another, but sold his own labour to another Israelite.

It was illegal to return a fugitive slave to his master. “You shall not give up to his master a slave who has escaped from his master to you. He shall dwell with you, in your midst, in the place that he shall choose within one of your towns, wherever it suits him. You shall not

wrong him.” Deuteronomy 23:15–16. Therefore, Israelite slaves could break their service contracts simply by leaving. Slavery in Israelite law was entered into voluntarily and could be ended voluntarily.

The Israelite slave was not expected to start over from scratch after he was released from service. Rather, his now former master, who had benefitted from his labour, was to provide him with “liberal” amounts of livestock, grain, and wine, in order to get him back on his feet, as part of Israel’s legal provision for the poor. “If your brother, a Hebrew man or a Hebrew woman, sells himself to you, he shall serve you six years, and in the seventh year you shall let him go free from you. And when you let him go free from you, you shall not let him go empty-handed. You shall furnish him liberally out of your flock, out of your threshing floor, and out of your winepress. As the LORD your God has blessed you, you shall give to him.”

Deuteronomy 15:12–14

If the slave desires to stay, then he and his master are to go to a public area (“to God” probably designates the tabernacle or temple), and to put a mark on his ear that would serve as permanent evidence that the servant publicly declared his desire to remain with his master, and that he was not being exploited by being held against his will. Exodus 21:5–6, Deuteronomy 15:16

“If he comes in single, he shall go out single; if he comes in married, then his wife shall go out with him. If his master gives him a wife and she bears him sons or daughters, the wife and her children shall be her master’s and he shall go out alone” (Exod 21:3–4). What this passage is teaching is that her term of service is not to be cut short simply because her husband’s ended before hers. In such a case, his options would have been either to wait for her to be freed or to ransom her, perhaps with some of the provisions that he received at the time of his release. As for the children, these would all be young, a maximum of five years old (assuming the woman entered service a year after the man and was married to him immediately), an age at which they need their mother, not their father. This law probably would have influenced how often marriage between slaves would have taken place and would have prevented women from foolishly entering into a marriage only to gain an early manumission.

When a man sells his daughter as a slave, she shall not go out as the male slaves do [that is, she shall not be released from her service at the end of six years]. If she does not please her master, who has designated her for himself, then he shall let her be redeemed. He shall have no right to sell her to a foreign people since he has broken faith with her. If he designates her for his son, he shall deal with her as with a daughter. If he takes another wife to himself, he shall not diminish her food, her clothing, or her marital rights. And if he does not do these three things for her, she shall go out for nothing, without payment of money (Exod 21:7–11).

It is clear that the woman in this passage has been given in marriage to the master’s household. The master here has either “designated her for himself” or “for his son” (vv. 8–9), and verse 10 gives the condition, “If he takes another wife for himself . . .” In ancient Near Eastern marriages, the groom customarily gave the bride’s family a bride price.[8] Here, forgiveness of debt would serve as that gift. The reason, then, that this female “slave”[9] is not given release is because marriage is for life, and doesn’t magically end after six years. If the notion of a father giving her daughter in marriage to man in order to pay off debt seems disturbing, it should be remembered that the practice of arranged marriage has been the norm in many cultures, even in our own day, and often results in marriages that

are just as happy and fulfilled as ones that are not arranged. At any rate, such an objection is not to the institution of Israelite debt-slavery per se, but to the practice of arranged marriages.

The law under question is geared exclusively towards the protection of the woman's rights, to protect her from exploitation at the hands of a more powerful family. Should the master desire to divorce her (i.e., "if she does not please her master"),[10] he is not permitted to sell her to a foreigner (v. 16). Since it was illegal to sell an Israelite to another Israelite (see above), only foreigners are mentioned here. In other words, the master couldn't circumvent Exod 21:16 by attempting to turn a profit in selling his ex-wife to a non-Israelite. No Israelite could deprive another of their membership in the covenant people of God. Instead, he was to permit her to be redeemed (v. 8)—a provision which only needs to be specified here since a marriage is in view.

The second situation, mentioned in verse 9, is that if she has been given to in marriage to his son. Here she must be treated as a full-daughter, which means that her children would be legitimate heirs with full inheritance rights, not second-generation servants. In case it isn't obvious, this was a very big deal.

Finally, in the event that a second wife is taken (polygamy was sometimes practiced in Israel, always with disastrous results), her status is not to be lower than the second wife. Any violation of the terms stated here result in her "freedom" (lit., her "going out"), and her family's debt is forgiven, even if the marriage was short-lived.

If the idea of debt servitude strikes us as primitive, we need to remember that many of the options that are available to us today were not available in the ancient world, for better or for worse. And how preferable is the modern situation, where the poor grow ever poorer as debt grows and grows, until the only option for the poor becomes bankruptcy, which not only destroys the debtor's access to credit, but also amounts to breaking one's oath at best, and thievery at worst? This system in ancient Israel was intended to maintain incentives to lend to the poor, where interest is not an option and when the risk of default were often quite high. These are the kinds of situations addressed by Old Testament law in a society that differed greatly from our own. It isn't a matter of whether these options would be good for us, living in twenty-first century America, but whether or not these were good for the ancient Israelites, living from 1200 to 586 BC.

More at

<https://emergencenj.org/blog/2019/01/04/does-the-bible-condone-slavery>

Thought starters for personal reflection or group discussion

1. Read Deuteronomy 15:12-18. List some differences between God's version of slavery, and the usual human version.
2. The Bible does NOT say we are slaves of Satan. What does it actually say in John 8:34, and Romans 6:16? In what ways do you think being a slave of Satan is different from being a slave to sin?
3. Read Psalm 49:7-8. Why do you think no one can ransom themselves, or anyone else? In Psalm 49:15 how is the problem solved?

4. But, Jesus was a man. Since no human can ransom another, what makes Jesus' blood so precious (1 Peter 1:18-19)?
 5. Write a list of the things to which we have been redeemed; then suggests some benefits that flow from each. A) Galatians 4:4-5,7. B) Galatians 3:13-14. C) 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. D) Titus 2:14. E) Revelation 5:9-10
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Children's talk

These two children's talks are not original to me. They are echoes of the hard work and faithful service of others who have generously shared their ideas. A little prep is required.

Place a glass a bowl of sweets in front of the children. Talk up how delicious each one tastes. Tell them they may each have a piece, but only if they have a 'Free sweet' token, that looks exactly like the one you now show them. (Print enough small tokens to give one to each child, 'Free sweet – can be redeemed this Sunday at church'.) Ask if anyone has a 'Free sweet' token exactly like the you have. No one has. Tell them, they cannot have a sweet, unless they have a token. Talk up the deliciousness of the sweets, and have the children search their pockets for a token. After this reality has set in, give each child a token and allow them to redeem that token for a sweet. Explain that the sweet is heaven and forgiveness, in Jesus is the token. Stress that they received the token and sweet as free gifts. 'The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.' Romans 6:23. (Warning: before the talk, ensure that no child is diabetic, etc.)

Give every child a make-believe bill or invoice showing, that because they have done wrong things (sins) they owe the amount of \$1,000. Explain that, if they are unable to pay the debt today, they will have to go to prison. Then, explain that God paid their debt at His own expense, and they are off the hook. Stress that Jesus' death on the cross is the money God used to cover their bills. Emphasise that they were redeemed by God's grace as a free gift. But if they want to be free of their debt, they need to go to Jesus so that He can cancel their debt and He will write across it, 'Paid in full'. Everybody can be saved, but only when we bring our sin to Jesus. 'Christ forgave us all our trespasses, having cancelled the debt ascribed to us in the decrees that stood against us. He took it away, nailing it to the cross!' Colossians 2:13b-14.
