

Soteriology
Lesson 10
Redemption Part Two

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There are two general things I'd like to say to all of you who run Bible studies and all that. One: don't preach your doubt. There's a time to discuss it in classroom, but don't preach your doubts. Number two: be careful about saying things God doesn't say when you teach.

Now in this classroom, part of the joy of the class, at least for me, I hope for you, is to be able to talk openly about these things that Christians disagree about. And to look at all sides of it and so forth. But when you go out to minister to people, you know, say what God says and don't preach your doubts. If you're not settled on something, then you go back and study it and don't talk until you are clear in your mind. And this is one of those issues. You've got to decide it.

I'm going to build up to something to show why this isn't a problem to me. And I mean, personally to me. I'm not talking about whether I've solved the problem exegetically or anything else. I'm talking about my heritage. I'm talking about the fact that most Jews do not struggle with the doctrine that we're struggling with today. They don't. And I'm going to try to explain to you why they don't. Why it seems very easy for them to understand this and it's all rooted in the sacrificial system as it relates to our Lord Jesus Christ. And we'll show you, hopefully, this will be helpful. It doesn't mean Jews believe in Jesus. I'm just saying they understand something about the sacrificial system that answers our questions and whether it is human reasoning or not, I'll leave you to judge. There are very clear directions from God in the sacrificial system that clears up this matter. And I hope to show you that here in just a moment.

Seven Characteristics of Redemption

Ransom • Passover Sacrifice • Propitiation
Reconciliation • Sin Offering
Sweet Savor Offering • Atonement

“Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.”

- Romans 3:24-26 KJV

So let's take the second word and that's the Passover Sacrifice. Now it is clear in 1 Corinthians 5:7 that Christ our Passover was sacrificed for us. So we know that He is the fulfillment of that Passover lamb. Now class, on the tenth day of the month of Aviv or Nissan, both are referring to the same month, just two different calendar systems. On the tenth day, a lamb is selected. It's quite a process. You usually allow those who breed them to select it. And they can't have a scab or a blemish or a mark on them or they're not acceptable. That's why in 1 Peter 1:19 when it says about Christ, "He is a lamb without blemish and without spot," Jews, hey, they know exactly what you're talking about. If that just has a sore on it, they won't accept it. You have to go back and buy another one.

Now, Passover is done once a year and it commemorates Jews leaving Egypt. They are "redeemed." There's our word—redeemed out of Egypt. What actually occurred was that judgment came upon the first born of all the households that failed to put the blood of the lamb on the top post and on the side post of their door. When the death angel passed over the home, when

he saw the blood, he would pass over. So Passover means relief from being judged; in other words, a sacrifice that protects you from judgment. Every home that had that blood was delivered from that judgment of the first born son. Every home!

Today, of course there is no temple, so the Jews have a symbolic lamb. We have the shank bone of the lamb, a bone, just put on the plate at Passover reminding yourself of this whole situation. It's a very interesting Jewish practice. In a Passover meal, which we have every year, we eat matzo, unleavened bread. No bread with yeast at all.

Now in a Passover meal there are four cups. Well, one cup, but poured in four times, a little ceremony. When we begin the meal, we pour in...and by the way, the wine is always mixed with three parts water, according to the rabbinical scholar, so that there is no evidence of any problem here of alcoholic beverage or anything else. Because Jews teach, just for a little clarity here, when alcoholic content is there, it's a process of fermentation as you know, and so that process of decay is a poor symbol for the preciousness of the blood which it symbolizes. You'll see in stores at the time of Passover special Passover wines. And they are uniquely designed, grape juice that's been protected, perhaps in a preservation process or it's mixed with water to make sure it's diluted.

Now, we pour that wine in the first cup. We call it the Cup of Thanksgiving. By the way, it's mentioned in the Luke account, "He took the cup and gave thanks" (Luke 22:17). That's the beginning of a meal. And the host of the meal will give that prayer of thanksgiving. Everybody will...it's like a toast we would say in a pagan environment. But we are doing is blessing the Lord God for that He has done for us.

Early on we will also have a second cup poured, which is called the "Cup of Plagues." Now in this Cup of Plagues, we dip the finger in the cup and sprinkle it ten times on the plate, just a drop. Why do you suppose they do that?—for the ten plagues.

After the meal is over we have both the bread, or the matzo bread broken, and a third cup. That third cup is called sometimes the "Cup of Blessing." It is also called the "Cup of

Redemption.” And that is the cup that symbolizes the blood on the doorposts. There is also a fourth cup, sometimes called the “Cup of Elijah,” sometimes called the “Cup of Praise.” At the end of the meal we send somebody out to see if Elijah is at the door, because we know the prophet Malachi said that he would come before the Lord comes. So, we hope this is the year. We will say, “Next year in Jerusalem, maybe He’s going to come.” So we’ll go see if Elijah is there. But it’s a beautiful time.

On the table there are three sheets of matzo bread, those squares that come in those little boxes you buy at the store. And they are put in a beautiful linen cloth. And there are three of them. At the beginning of the meal, the host pulls out...by the way, the host has a pillow, because we recline in a sense of freedom. We sometimes stand a lot because we remind ourselves that they ate it standing. The sense is we are free people; so sometimes Jews, in their tradition, will be standing on the pillows. You wonder what is the pillow doing there? It’s a statement. It’s a sign that we are free. We’ve been redeemed and we are now resting in the Lord’s great provision for us. A lot of truth there, you can see, applies to the Christian.

But anyway, you take out piece number two and you break it in two. You stick half back in. And the other half you hide somewhere in the house. Not real difficult. You want the youngest person that’s there to go find it. And you want them to find it. You do that after the meal. When they bring that piece back, it’s that piece that we all break a piece off of and that’s where our communion comes from. Now that’s called an *afikomen*, in a Passover, a Jewish Passover, which kind of means in English like dessert. But it’s not a sweet dessert. It’s just flat bread, matzo bread with no yeast in it.

But that’s what Jesus said when He took the bread and broke it. Remember it had already been broken in two previously. So you see the symbolism is beautiful. When you ask Jewish people, “Why do you have three sheets of matzo bread?” They say, “We don’t know, tradition?” Read Jewish books. They don’t know. Rabbinical scholars, they don’t know, have no idea. And

by the way, we don't do anything with the other two sheets. They just sit there on the table. But we pull out number two always. It's offensive to pull out one or three, always two.

See we believe, as Christians, that God is manifesting Himself as Father, Son, and Spirit. We see the triunity of God; that God is the bread of life that gives life to the world (John 6:33). But number two was pulled out, God the Son, and broken in two, because He died on the cross. Now we all, by faith, take up His broken body and we become believers by the taste of faith, so to speak, as we taste His body (cf. 1 Corinthians 11:24).

And then the cup we take, He said, "...is the New Testament in My blood" (1 Corinthians 11:25). So there you clearly know, by what Jesus said that the Passover lamb and its blood on the door represent the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ who redeemed us out of Egypt. So, ransom, the price that is paid is the blood. The Passover sacrifice the blood of the doorpost, really is to protect us from the judging hand of God.

Number three. Propitiation. Now in English when you propitiate something, you are satisfying...like if somebody is mad at you and they've got a baseball bat ready to club you over the head. You're going to say, "Wait, wait, wait! Let me explain this to you." You're trying to propitiate them. You're trying to appease their wrath. That's the meaning of propitiation. You are satisfying the wrath of God against sin.

And we read in 1 John 2:2 that "Jesus is the propitiation for our sins, believers, and not for ours only, but the sins of the whole world." There's another passage that tells us, wait a minute, did Jesus die on the cross for unbelievers? Yes, He did. Yes, He did in some sense.

Now, propitiation is connected to Passover in a Jewish mind. First of all, what's the word in Greek that's translated propitiation in English? What is it really, class? Mercy seat. That's the same word in the Greek Old Testament translates the Hebrew word for the mercy seat. Now the mercy seat is in the Holy of Holies. The high priest goes in only once a year on the Day of Atonement, Yom Kippur, once a year, the Day of Atonement. He also never sits down. There are no chairs in the temple. So it was significant wasn't it, when our Lord ascended up on high and

He sat down. When He had purged our sins, He sat down (Hebrews 1:3). That's the first high priest to ever sit down in ministering the sacrifice. It's finished.

Now that priest goes in and puts the blood of an animal that's been killed on that mercy seat. It's a slab of gold. It's the lid of the Ark of the Covenant. And it's got two golden cherubim, like they're the angels that passed over the home. So the wrath of God, he's going to kill the first born unless I see the blood. Propitiation appeases or satisfies the wrath of God.

Now listen carefully, class. On the Day of Atonement all Jews believe that the wrath of God has been satisfied for them. It doesn't matter whether you're a believer or not, it doesn't matter whether you're Orthodox, Reformed, or Conservative. On the Day of Atonement, the wrath of God against all sin for Gentiles as well as Jews, is paid for.

The next question is: Do Jews believe that every Jew is therefore redeemed? And the answer is no. No, we don't. The wrath of God is settled. But it doesn't mean that you're redeemed. During the year between the days of atonements, when you sin you have to bring a sacrifice for you sin. No matter how many times it is! Aren't you glad that He doesn't judge you for your thoughts? There wouldn't be enough animals in the world to take care of us. But when we actually did something that violates God's law, we'd have to bring an animal sacrifice.

Now, there are two kinds of sinning. There's ignorant sinning and willfully sinning. Both words are unfortunate English words. They, first of all, they don't mean that you are ignorant of one and not of the other. And secondly, they don't mean that you are willful and in rebellion in one and not willful in the other. So it's unfortunate, these English words, but since that's all we've got in the English Bible, we'll again talk about it. There's willful sinning and ignorant sinning.

What is ignorant sinning? Ignorant sinning means that you sinned. You knew what you did and you brought a sacrifice for it (Leviticus 4:2). You were redeemed. Willful sinning means you knew what you did, but you didn't bring a sacrifice. That person, according to the Old Testament, is cut off from Israel forever. In other words, he's lost. Was he propitiated on the Day

of Atonement? Yes. Was he redeemed? No. He committed willful sin by refusing to bring a sacrifice.

Now do you understand a passage like Hebrews 10:26, that says “If we sin willfully after receiving the knowledge of the truth there remains no more sacrifice for sin”? Jew would know exactly what was meant. It means you refused to accept the sacrifice, which in that case is the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of all of those. So what he’s telling the Jews, “If you refuse to come to the sacrifice of the Messiah, you are lost forever.” That’s what he told them. Everybody understand now?

So you see in a Jewish mind when you say “He died for the whole world and unbelievers,” they wouldn’t have a problem with that even though they don’t believe in Jesus. But I mean, they don’t have a problem with that sacrificially. Why?—because that happens to them every year on the Day of Atonement. The whole nation is propitiated, but the individual person is not redeemed until he brings the individual sacrifice, which is to us a symbol of faith. Believing in what we say Christ did.

Did Christ die for the sins of the whole world? I don’t have any trouble preaching that. Yes. He died for the sins of the whole world, including those who will be going to hell. In the marvelous, mysterious work of God, He chooses to redeem out of all those who have been propitiated, only a certain amount of people who He in fact put their names in the Lamb’s Book of Life from eternity past. Why? So that we would all, who are redeemed, praise Him for the glory of His grace.

Now the question is in our minds: “Did God predestine certain ones of them to be lost?” It’s a difficult subject. From a human conclusion point of view, a lot of people go that way. But you see, the Bible never says that. It doesn’t use predestination in that way. It only uses it for believers. And as a matter of fact, in Romans 9, Paul gave us an explanation of this that might kind of help. Turn to Romans 9:18. It’s the very passage that’s so troubling about “God hardens whom He wants to harden, has mercy on whom He wants to have mercy.”

Class, those of you who have read Exodus, let me ask you a question. Did God harden Pharaoh's heart before he hardened his own heart?

Class response: "No!"

You are wrong! Go back and read Exodus (chapters 4 to 14) again. Not only are you wrong, God says it several times. It's surprising how quickly you all said that.

Let me ask you another question. Did Pharaoh harden his heart? Yes, he did. Did the Lord harden Pharaoh's heart? Yes. Who hardened whose heart more times? God hardened his heart more times. But I asked you did Pharaoh harden his heart before God hardened his heart and you all said "No!" It's exactly the opposite.

You see, it's easy isn't it? To misunderstand even what Paul wrote in Romans 9:18. He doesn't say that God only hardens those who harden their hearts. He didn't say that at all. He says "whom He wills, He hardens." We don't like that. And we ask the question, "Well why does He find fault then? Who has resisted His will?" God said, "Excuse Me? Who are you to ask that?" (cf. Romans 9:19-20)

Is there a time when asking questions is wrong? According to the Bible there is. Does God want you to ask questions? Sure! Don't stop asking questions and thinking. But sometimes it's wrong. Why? Because you step over a line and you are accusing the God who made you and you don't even come one inch to knowing what He knows. And you cross over a line and you start challenging Him. What right do you have to do this? Who do you think you are? In other words, you don't mean it, but your question crosses a line. It crosses a line between a humble servant saying, "You know I really don't understand this. Could you just help me a little bit more with it?" And then if I don't understand, my humility says, "You know what, if I never understand this, I'll praise You the rest of my life. I'm so glad to be Your child."

You cross the line sometimes and say, "Who do you think you are?"

And God says, “Excuse Me? Who do you think you are? You are nothing but clay. I’m the Potter.” Have you ever seen clay jump up and say, “Hey, I don’t like this vase?” No. The clay is formed the way the potter wants it.

But one of the interesting things is in Romans 9:22-23. Watch this carefully, class. What if God—he’s presenting an ‘if’ hypothetical case, but it also has some teaching merit here.

22 What if God, willing to show His wrath, and to make His power known, [that was His reason, that’s His only reason, to show His justice, His wrath, His anger against sin. What if He] endured [bear up under all this anger, hostility] with much long-suffering the vessels of wrath fitted to destruction: [Middle voice, fitted themselves to destruction]

23 And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, [And now he says, they didn’t fit themselves to glory] which He had afore [meaning previously] prepared unto glory.

What if God wants to do that? What right do you have to question it? In this little situation he gave us, we have also a clue that God in fact, predestines, prepares ahead of time, puts our names down in the Lamb’s Book of Life—does it all so we will praise Him. But in fact, never says that He predestines, sending people to hell, never said that. As a matter of fact, He gives every man an opportunity to respond. He holds them accountable for not responding.

You say, “Wait a minute. It looks like He caused them not to respond.” And here’s where the intricacies of this whole argument come in. Let me ask you a question. Did God, in choosing you, give you the ability to choose Him? And why would that be necessary if He’s already chosen you? Because He doesn’t want robots! How in the world can you praise and glorify Him for His grace if in fact you never chose it? It’s an interesting question, isn’t it?

You say, “Wait a minute. I thought you said we are already chosen?” I did. Jesus said in John 15:16, “You didn’t choose Me, I chose you.” Now isn’t it interesting that some people read that and believe that we didn’t choose Him. No, no, no. You chose Him. “Whoever will call on the name of the Lord, will be saved” (cf. Acts 2:21). “As many as received Him to them He gave the right to become the children of God” (cf. John 1:12). Whoever believes in Him will be saved.

We have all these questions that come up. “Well, wait a minute. I don’t understand.” Welcome to the family of God. I don’t understand either. Bottom line, I do not understand. I know one thing, there’s a constant tendency of human reasoning to just slip off of what the Bible says and all of a sudden be over here somewhere.

I remember the first time I was so overwhelmed with this. And I went out to witness to somebody. I was so frustrated, I couldn’t believe it. I’m thinking “What am I doing this for? He’s either saved or he’s not. His name’s either in the Lamb’s Book of Life or it’s not. Now, I know I don’t know, but God knows.” So anyway, I go to this guy’s home. His wife asked me to come talk to him. Then I thought well maybe in the sovereignty of God, God had his wife call to ask me to come. It doesn’t mean that he’s receptive. This whole thing could be a basket case. So I come in and I said to him, “Can I ask you a question?”

He said, “What?” He was being polite.

I said, “Why did you want me to come?”

He said, “I didn’t.”

You understand what that did to my little sovereignty question? “You did not want me to come.” Now the question—“Why am I here?”

He said, “You’re here because my wife asked you to come. She wants me to hear what you have to say. I don’t really care.”

So now I’m wondering about the leading of the Holy Spirit. You know, I’m just getting more confused by the moment. And I said, “Look let me just tell you what we believe.”

He says, “Fine make it quick.”

Another little sign! David, why did you go? I just started in. “Now, let me just try to explain, we’re all sinners...”

He says, “You came all the way over here to tell me that? Of course we’re all sinners!” He’s antagonistic, you know. I am thinking, what I doing here? This is crazy!

I said, “Well you see, the Bible teaches Jesus died on the cross.” And I didn’t even say “for our sins” because I didn’t want to include him if he was lost; if his name wasn’t in the Book of Life! Do you understand how.... I mean, I’m just going crazy! And I’m just trying to explain the gospel and I’m getting more frustrated. I can still see him. He’s looking at me and watching me.

He says, “Are you trying to ask me if I want to become a believer in Jesus Christ?” I mean, he’s helping me with the process!

I said, “Well yeah, but I don’t want to force you to go against your will.”

He said, “I wouldn’t.”

I said, “Sorry. I should never have implied that you wanted to.”

He said, “Actually I want to.”

I looked at him and I said, “You do what?”

He said, “I want to. What am I supposed to do?”

What I should have said to show my confusion was, “Well, if your name is in the Lamb’s Book of Life, and if you are one of the elect, and if the Holy Spirit is truly working on you, then here’s what I would recommend....” I didn’t. I just said, “Well believe in the Lord Jesus Christ.”

He said, “It sounds reasonable to me.”

“Well, it just can’t be reasonable. I mean, you really have to commit yourself to it.”

“Well, I need a change.”

“Maybe you’re not ready, you know.”

I never spent a more miserable night in my life. This guy now is getting mad at me because he wants to be saved. And his wife is going, “No, no.” She’s worried I’m going to talk him out of it, you know.

Finally he said, “Are we supposed to do this on our own? Or do you have some ritual you go through?”

“Oh no, no, it’s just your own. . . .”

“Like I could pray right now?”

I mean, he’s filling in the lines.

He said, “Do you need to pray?”

I said, “No, no. If the Lord’s working it’s your deal.” I am so embarrassed. Anyway, the guy prays. And in his prayer, he asked God to forgive me for not explaining it right! Would you believe he’s the pastor of a Bible-teaching church now? We both laugh about it. And from that moment on I said, “Look, I don’t know which one’s elected or not, I’m just going to tell them all the same blooming thing.” But it’s a lot more fun to just share Christ and not worry about it. I’m not going to go through that agony ever again! Okay, you understand me?

Which brings us to reconciliation; we need to be reconciled now. Reconciliation is a restoration back to a previous condition. Well, I’m sure before the Fall certainly there was a relationship between God and man that was radically changed. But in 2 Corinthians 5:19-20, it says that even you and I “have received the ministry of reconciliation; that as ambassadors in Christ’s stead, we can urge men to be reconciled to God.” And yet we don’t know who is going to be and who isn’t, but God urges us to do that. It’s a wonderful word.

In the Old King James of Romans 5:11 it uses the word atonement, but in the Greek it’s the word reconciliation. When Christ died on the cross He reconciled man to God, the enmity is gone. Man can remain a rebel but that which is the problem was solved by God Himself. That’s a beautiful thing isn’t it? There was no deal made between man and God. A lot of us when we see reconciliation in peace treaties, each person gives a little bit and so forth. God did the reconciling.

Isn't it interesting that the enmity was our problem. God loved. The One who loved is the One who reconciled. He who loved solved the problem for us.

I remember an old time evangelist talking about a guy who was terrible drunk in town and said he would never be saved and all that. And one day he walked up to him and said, "I just wanted you to know that from a technical point of view, God doesn't have anything against you." It was kind of a turning point in this guy. He came to know the Lord. But the point was that you've been reconciled. You've been propitiated. It's satisfactory. There isn't anything else that can be done for you. God now wants you to receive it. And if you do, you'll be redeemed. If you don't, you'll be lost.

He's also a sin offering. Interesting how often that is used—118 times in the Bible! What is sin offering according to the book of Leviticus? Well it bears the sin of the offerer, confessing your sins over the animal. I want to ask you, how many of your sins did He bear? All of them! What a wonderful thing to say about the redemption that we have in Christ. Everything that you and I have done wrong was on Him.

Here's a problem for you. On the Day of Atonement there are two goats. One is killed, the blood is taken into the Holy of Holies by the high priest. The other one is not. He holds it steady, confesses all the sins of the people, then lets it go out into the wilderness (cf. Leviticus 16-7-8). Sometimes they lead it by a rope out at least several meters away from the holy place. And then they let it go. And some people say that that goat is an offering to Satan. I think that's really wrong. Christ died outside the camp for us. He bore our reproach. He is also that goat that goes outside the holy place. And I like that. He's both goats. The point is that one sheds its blood for our sins. The other one bore our sins and removed them as far as the east is from the west. It's a beautiful symbolism of God taking our sins away. "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).

He's also the sweet savor offering. Something that smells good. Used in the New Testament. I love Ephesians 5:2, "Walk in love as Christ also has loved us and given Himself an

offering and a sweet smelling savor to God.” And you know, those sacrifices can stink. Did you know that? Have you ever smelled, really got up close and smelled sheep? I mean, they really stink. They need breath mints, I’m telling you. They stink. And you know I used to think those sheep, those little fluffy white...I never saw a white one out in the Middle East in my life. They are all dish water dirty. I mean they are just filthy. “All we like sheep have gone astray” (Isaiah 53:6). And those sacrifices can stink to high heaven. The smell and the stench is unbelievable! Isn’t it interesting that right in front of the second veil is an altar of incense. And a special little brew as a sweet smelling perfume that the smoke not only represents the prayers going up to the Lord, but it also removes the stench of all the sacrifices and the blood that has dried out now and is all over the priest’s garments. It’s very interesting. And God wants you to know that when His Son died, it was a sweet smell in the nostrils of God. Boy, I like that!

And atonement, it means a covering for sin. A covering. Now this is a problem because when Jesus died, He wasn’t just a covering, though He does cover our sin. But He wasn’t just a covering, He took it away. To be redeemed means that you are bought out of the marketplace of sin. Now let me just summarize that by saying when you go as a slave, you’re owned by a master. And he decides he’s going to sell you. He has a choice. Now suppose he really loves you and wants to adopt you as a son. He can do that. Then you wouldn’t have to go back down to the slave market. But suppose you really want to move. You say to him, “You know, my family is still back in Macedonia and I...would it be possible, sir? Would it be possible that you could somehow sell me to somebody who is a slave owner over in Macedonia so that I could be closer to my family?” And if he really likes you, he might do that. He takes you down to the slave market and he sells you.

Now, a ransom price is paid by somebody to your owner. So, in the picture we have here, we are all slaves to Satan and sin and a ransom price is paid to set us free. But, you’re still a slave under that idea. Could he pay enough of a price that it would set you free to no longer come back into the slave market? And the answer is, yes. And that is also used of redemption.

You're not only bought as going from one slave owner to another, but the price for you is so great that you don't have to ever go back into the slave market of sin, death and hell. You are no longer under the bondage and snare of the enemy. You have been taken captive by our Lord Jesus Christ. You have a new owner now.

But you know something, if a slave owner really loves that slave, many of them because of their faithful service or work or whatever, actually pay the price to adopt them. Did you know that you could have an heir to all of your inheritance who was a former slave? All you have to do is pay the price, the ransom price and you can set him free by an official ceremony. And he's now adopted as your son and will receive all of your inheritance. Imagine going from the slave market all the way to a son who will receive the inheritance. That's what the Lord did for you. He bought you. He bought you out of the slave market never to return again. And He also paid the price of your adoption. And you are now adopted as a son of Jesus Christ and now a joint heir with Him of all that He has. That's pretty terrific, huh? All because of the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ!

Now, we're going to take up the consequences of this next time.

Let's pray.

Father, I thank you that we have been redeemed by the precious blood of Christ. We have been set free. Sin no longer has dominion over us. We don't have to be under it as a slave master any more. The devil has no power over us. We've overcome him through the blood of the Lamb. And though he tempts and entices and baits us, You told us You would protect us from the evil one. And we can resist the devil and he would flee from us (James 4:7). We have a new owner. An owner who loved us so much He not only paid the price to get us out of that slave market, but in His love He adopted us as sons. We are now sons of God by faith. And joint heirs with Jesus Christ. And you said in the ages to come You will continue to show us the exceeding riches of Your kindness toward us. Thank You

Lord for Your wonderful grace and Your mercy to us. And all of these difficult matters, Lord, regarding the death of Jesus Christ and why this and why that. Teach us, Lord, to have a heart that is humble before You. You've told us many things that we are to do. You've assumed that we have a will to respond, otherwise You would not have commanded it. And yet, Lord, You chose us before the foundation of the world. It is indeed a mystery to us. And I pray that You would give us the right attitudes. That we would walk humbly with our God and we would praise You and glorify You all of our days. And we thank You, in Jesus' name. Amen.