

Captivity Turned - Pentecost

by G.W. North

Redemption is only possible through baptism in the Spirit, which is the means by which a person is initiated into the redemptive life of Jesus.

Scripture: Isaiah 43:1, Acts 2:4, Romans 6:3

Topics: "Redemption", "Holy Spirit"

Description

G.W. North emphasizes that true redemption is made effective through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, paralleling the experience of ancient Israel in Babylon with the promise of salvation. He explains that baptism in the Spirit is essential for experiencing redemption in Christ, as it connects believers to the death and resurrection of Jesus. The sermon highlights that the Holy Spirit acts as the Comforter, facilitating this baptism and ensuring that believers are fully immersed in Christ's redemptive life. North draws on biblical examples, particularly from Isaiah, to illustrate that redemption is contingent upon the Spirit's outpouring, which is necessary for liberation from captivity and sin. Ultimately, he asserts that the experience of redemption available to believers today surpasses that of the Israelites in the past, as it is rooted in the complete work of Christ at Calvary and the subsequent gift of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost.

Transcript

Redemption was made effective for us by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. This is how it was accomplished for ancient Israel when captive in Babylon. In effect what God said to Israel through Isaiah when promising them salvation was, 'I have redeemed thee thou art mine. I will pour out my Spirit water floods'. As a result Israel would be brought back from captivity.

It is quite clear from scripture that redemption is not possible to men except through baptism in the Spirit. There is only one method known to God and therefore revealed in the Bible whereby a person may experience 'the redemption in Christ Jesus by faith in His blood', namely by the Baptism of the Holy Ghost. Jesus must baptise us into Himself and He can only do that in one way - the way of Himself. He went to the cross and the tomb accomplishing the act of redemption en route, pouring out His precious blood and rising again from the dead. He did not immediately baptise His restored disciples into Himself however, but promised them He would do so 'not many days hence' and that they would be as truly baptised in the Holy Ghost as they were in water when John baptised them in Jordan.

Jesus was waiting until the day of Pentecost should fully come. That was the day God planned that Christ should fully come into them and they fully into Christ. He knew this could not be accomplished except

each person was baptised in the same way as Jesus, via the cross and the grave; each must be crucified, dead and buried and raised as He. What happened to Him physically must happen to us spiritually. This is the whole point; everything turns on this. Except there is individual experience of it there can be no life for anyone. So important is it that Jesus Himself must both supervise and personally administer that death and resurrection to each person who would know redemption. For this He needed the assistance of the Holy Ghost. Jesus could no more accomplish redemption of mankind without the help of the Spirit than without the cross.

This is one of the main reasons the Holy Spirit is called the Comforter - Paraclete - one called alongside to help. He was needed by Jesus to be the medium in which believers could be baptised into the eternal life in Himself. Therefore on the day of Pentecost Jesus baptised men and women in the Spirit into Himself via the cross and the grave that they might know His redemptive life. It is His life alone which gave virtue and power to the blood to make it redemptive in effect to us all that we might live in eternal redemption in Him.

This is why Isaiah so clearly makes redemption contingent upon the outpouring of the Spirit. In the chapters dealing with it he is speaking to a people in captivity. In the first great captivity Moses speaks of the lamb and the blood; in this second captivity by the same inspiration Isaiah speaks of the Spirit. He does not mention the blood in relationship to it at all. For redemption from Egypt the blood of the lamb, for redemption from Babylon the Holy Ghost. In no other book of the Bible are so many references made to redemption as in Isaiah. More notably still, for its size, by comparison Ruth outstrips even this major prophet in the number of times redemption is mentioned. As already noted, in Ruth the thought of purchase is uppermost, but in Isaiah it is the outpoured Spirit.

The prophet insists that in order to effect salvation from captivity and bondage and sin, Israel's Creator and Redeemer, their Holy One who had chosen them, would pour out the Spirit in floods: 'I have redeemed thee', He says, 'I have called thee by thy name, thou art mine'. He deliberately introduces the same elements as those He enforced upon their forefathers in Egypt; Israel had to be redeemed by blood and pass through the Red Sea in the beginning, and now so must they -- 'When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee'.

Previous generations of Israel had passed through the mighty waters of the Red Sea and Jordan's river respectively, and there is no different way out from captivity in Babylon. But there was to be no comparative bloodshed for them in their day; neither was any blood redemption wrought for Israel at Jordan; in neither case was it necessary. The one great redemptive act was sufficient for Israel for all time, 'I have redeemed thee', (N.B. past tense, not 'I will redeem thee').

The blood once shed in Egypt was all sufficient for all Israel throughout their history, but it could not be made effective to them without the Baptism of the Spirit. Although the blood is insisted upon only once for redemption in Egypt, the Holy Spirit is referred to on all three occasions. Whether it was in Egypt or Canaan or Babylon, the Holy Ghost is made indispensable to redemption. In the first generation the children of Israel were baptised at the Red Sea. In the second generation they were baptised at Jordan and now they must be baptised at the point of crisis in Babylon.

Ezekiel's prophecy opens with the prophet sitting among the captives on the banks of Chebar. Babylon lay east of the Euphrates: to return to their land Israel had to cross the river, travelling westward to Canaan. At the conclusion of the book Ezekiel shows the river proceeding from the temple in Jerusalem and repeatedly insists that it is crossed over -- 'he brought me through the waters' -- until at the last attempt it

could not be crossed -- waters to swim in. The pathway to blessing for the redeemed of the Lord is through the waters.

The Lord never attempted of old, nor does He promise for the present day or in the future, that redemption can be experienced or known apart from the baptism in the Spirit.

In this way the Lord consistently taught that redemption is only possible through baptism. Water was the chosen element then, for as yet the Holy Spirit had not been outpoured, the universally comprehensive redemption had not been accomplished and the situation did not warrant it. Redemption was at that time national and not international, local not universal. Nevertheless, although Israel could not be baptised in the Spirit to form them into a nation, they had to be seemingly baptised in water. In fact neither at the Red Sea, nor yet at Jordan, were they immersed in water - instead they discovered the path through the water(s). They found the way - God had hidden His way beneath the waters of the Red Sea and Jordan. Until He revealed it no one ever dreamed that beneath the sea and the river lay a path for the redeemed of the Lord to pass over. It was there all the time, but hidden from every eye.

The Calvary way of crucifixion - death, burial and resurrection - is revealed upon the pages of scripture, but hidden away from human understanding in the Baptism of the Spirit. Many preachers, teachers, expositors and commentators have taught the typical significance of water baptism. Throughout the years champions of truth have spoken of dying with Christ, buried with Christ, risen with Christ, but few have seen and taught that water baptism can only be valid as it is presented as a type of the baptism in the Spirit administered by Jesus the Christ. Herein the body of flesh never gets wet, but the spirit is totally immersed and the soul is saturated and the being filled in, by and with, the Holy Spirit as the person is processed through Christ's Calvary into Christ's body. This is eternal life through total redemption unto absolute possession -- 'I have redeemed thee, thou art mine'

By the waters of the Red Sea the redemption of Israel is seen to be 'out of'. By the river Jordan it is shown to be 'in to', and by the 'waters' (literal or figurative of the Spirit) of Babylon the same truth is revealed, 'out of' and 'in to'. In the former two the emphasis should be laid upon the Holy Ghost as the way, while in the latter the emphasis is on being filled - drinking in the Holy Spirit - a privilege connected with and opened only to the people of the New Covenant - that is spiritual Israel.

If Pentecost had not followed Calvary the way of redemption could not have been revealed, for it only revealed to us as being in the Spirit. 'We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel', mourned the disciples on the Emmaus road; they did not know that they were talking to the Redeemer or that Redemption had been achieved at Calvary. The unknown Christ spoke to them of the necessity of His sufferings and glorification, opening the theme from the scriptures, and finally revealing Himself to their wondering gaze, only to vanish from their sight again. They had listened with burning hearts to His teachings by the way, but never heard Him say one word about redemption.

Not once did the risen Lord speak the word they longed to hear. He couldn't, for until the Holy Ghost was outpoured it was not available to them. They needed a new concept of redemption altogether - they needed to be baptised into Him. The redemption God has provided for us, as for them, is in Christ who paid for it at Calvary and supplied it at Pentecost. It is total purchase of and immersion into all the inward states of the person of the Christ. The redeeming act leads to the redemption experience, which is realised in the redemptive state of the person of the Redeemer.

None of this was available to Israel in Egypt or the wilderness or Canaan. Ruth knew nothing of it, nor did the captives returning from Babylon. All these experienced and understood something of the gracious dealings of God in their lives and in them to some degree certain aspects of the redemption in Christ Jesus are typified. But although God did such great things for them, whereof they were glad, it is said, whether nationally or individually, they only experienced outward redemption.

This is not to say that many of them did not enjoy soul salvation to the fullest extent possible under law. There is no doubt many did, but God 'has provided some better thing for us' and we are more glad than they. The redeeming act of Jesus enabled Him to administer to us the redemptive experience whereby we are powerfully initiated into Himself, the Redeemer, so that we should be redeemed by Him and in Him.

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