

Thoughts on the Mystery of Redemption

by Thomas Reade

Thomas Reade explores the profound mystery of redemption, emphasizing God's grace, human free will, and the necessity of faith in Christ for salvation.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 29:29, Psalm 103:2, Ezekiel 18:32, John 6:44, 2 Corinthians 12:9, 1 Timothy 3:16

Topics: "Redemption Through Faith", "Salvation By Grace"

Description

Thomas Reade delves into the profound mystery of redemption, emphasizing the unfathomable nature of God's wisdom and the revealed truths in His Word. He highlights the sinful state of man, the eternal redemption through Jesus Christ, and the importance of faith and obedience for salvation. Reade warns against sinful curiosity and willful disobedience, stressing the need to heed the Spirit's call and not grieve or quench His work in our lives. He explains that while God's Spirit influences and draws sinners to salvation, the choice to accept or reject lies with each individual, ultimately leading to either life or death.

Transcript

7. THOUGHTS ON THE MYSTERY OF REDEMPTION

"Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness." 1 Tim. 3:16

"The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us, and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law." Deut. 29:29

Almighty and everlasting Jehovah! clouds and darkness are round about you. Many deep and unfathomable mysteries are contained in your sacred word, yet on this my soul relies- that You O Lord are good; and that there is no unrighteousness in you. In the day of judgment, you will manifest your Justice and Truth, and silence the accusations of your enemies forever. Let me not, O Lord, indulge a sinful curiosity in prying into those things which you have wisely concealed, but keep my soul as a weaned child. Make me wise unto salvation through faith in your dear Son. Impart unto me, your unworthy servant, the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of you, that the word of Christ may dwell in me richly in all wisdom and spiritual understanding, producing in me the peaceable fruits of righteousness which are by Jesus Christ, to the praise and glory of God.

In your word I read, that man is born in sin, and therefore deserving of eternal death. In your word I read, that Jesus died, and through the merit of his precious blood has obtained eternal redemption for us. "Bless

the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all his benefits, who forgives all your iniquities, who heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from destruction, who crowns you with loving-kindness and tender mercies."

If it be asked- Will all the fallen race of Adam enter into the Ark which mercy has provided? Alas! no. As it was in the days of Noah, so it is now- the thoughtless, giddy, unbelieving world is as much occupied as the Antediluvians were, though warned by that preacher of righteousness, in eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, smiling at the superstitious fears of the faithful, and feeling no concern about the threatened judgment. But those who love the world shall perish with the world.

"As I live, says the Lord, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." "The Lord is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." How, then, comes it to pass that any are lost? Because they themselves choose the path of destruction, and will what is wrong, and persist in it; for sin consists in willing wrong, and the wages of sin is death. Men will not come to Christ, that they might have life; they will not have him to reign over them, therefore thus says the Lord, "I will 'destine' you to the sword. All of you will bow before the executioner, for when I called, you did not answer. When I spoke, you did not listen. You deliberately sinned--before my very eyes--and chose to do what you know I despise."

But does not the Spirit of God graciously strive with sinners? Yes! he does strive with them, though they resist his heavenly motions, grieve him by their ingratitude, and finally quench the holy fire. This is evident from- "My Spirit shall not always strive with man, for he is mortal," corrupted and depraved. And with whom did he strive? With those who perished in the waters. "In your love, you were patient with them for many years. You sent your Spirit, who, through the prophets, warned them about their sins. But still they wouldn't listen! So once again you allowed the pagan inhabitants of the land to conquer them. But in your great mercy, you did not destroy them completely or abandon them forever. What a gracious and merciful God you are! Also from- "They rebelled, and vexed his Holy Spirit: therefore he was turned to be their enemy, and he fought against them." "You stubborn people! You are heathen at heart and deaf to the truth. Must you forever resist the Holy Spirit? But your ancestors did, and so do you!"

Founded on the truth, Paul thus warns the Christian converts to whom he wrote "Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby you are sealed unto the day of redemption." "Quench not the Spirit." How pathetically does the God of all grace expostulate with his fallen creatures- "Why will you die, O house of Israel?" "Oh! that you had hearkened to my commandments; then your peace would be as a river, and your righteousness as the waves of the sea." "Oh! that there were such a heart in them, that they would fear me and keep all my commandments, always, that it might be well with them, and with their children forever." "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you that kill the prophets, and stone those who are sent unto you, how often would I have gathered your children together, even as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you would not."

Impressed with a deep sense of the blessedness of obedience, how solemnly, yet affectionately, does David charge his son Solomon: "And you Solomon my son, know the God of your father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind for the Lord searches all hearts, and understands all the imagination of the thoughts: if you seek him, he will be found of you; but if you forsake him, he will cast you off forever." Thus, all who perish, perish through willful disobedience to the divine command. The sinner will be condemned, because he willfully rejected the offers of mercy, so lovingly made to him, through Christ in the Gospel; because he stifled the convictions of the Spirit; because his will was uniformly opposed to the will of God.

"This," said our Lord to Nicodemus, "is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that does evil hates the light, neither comes to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." Paul declares: "The carnal mind is enmity against God, for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be." "To be carnally-minded is death."

How, then, comes it to pass that any are saved? Because God is love. "A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and you shall keep my judgments and do them." "You has he quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." "By grace are you saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." Thus the Holy Spirit overcomes the natural enmity of the will, and influences the sinner, by enlightening his understanding, to choose the way of life, opened to him through the Atonement of Christ, as revealed in the Gospel.

But, does the Spirit of God never 'force' the will of the sinner to accept of salvation? No, never. The sinner is not dragged against his will to the foot of the Cross, but he is drawn there through the sweet constraining power of love. "It is in the nature of the will, to will freely whatever it wills; for the will cannot be compelled." Compulsion and willingness are directly opposed to each other. God, therefore, in the conversion of sinners, acts upon them, by his grace, not as machines, but as rational creatures. If man chooses death, it is owing to his moral depravity, and the fault is entirely his own, because he wills it, as a free agent. "I have loved strangers, and after them I will go." But if he chooses life, it is through the enlightening and awakening influences of the Spirit of God, who works in him to will and to do of his good pleasure.

Yet, be it ever remembered, the choice is his own. It is the voluntary act of the renewed will- "When you said, Seek my face; my heart said unto you, Your face, Lord, will I seek." So, when Saul was converted, he cried out- "Lord, what will you have me to do?" He was now made willing in the day of God's power to perform a cheerful and willing obedience.

If the view now taken of man's condition here, be scripturally correct, we must come to this conclusion: that man is a free agent, a responsible being, justly chargeable with the guilt of willfully refusing the offers of divine mercy through Christ; and yet, that it is wholly of grace, if he becomes willing to accept of these offers and is finally saved.

Fallen man, if left to himself, would never love God; he would never come to God; his rebellious will would forever oppose his approach to God. On this account it was, that the Redeemer said: "You will not come to me that you might have life," and, "No man can come unto me unless the Father who has sent me draws him." "Him that comes unto me, I will in no wise cast out."

Now, O my soul! praise the Lord, who has showed you in his word these precious truths. Use the means which he has appointed for obtaining the blessings of salvation. Go to your God through Jesus Christ. Beg earnestly the pardon of your sins through his atoning blood. Implore the Spirit's aid to illuminate your mind, to rectify your will, to purify your affections, to take away the serpent's enmity, the serpent's poison from your heart, to guide you into all truth, to give you an unshaken faith in the Savior, a delight in holiness, a cleaving unto God while life and being last.

But, O my soul, never dare to fathom with your scanty line, the deep things of God. While standing on the brink of the vast profound, unite with Paul in his self-abasing exclamation: "O the depth of the riches both

of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out." And with David, "Your judgments are a great deep." "Your way is in the sea, and your path in the great waters, and your footsteps are not known."

Act upon this great truth- that the mysteries of redemption are revealed to us as objects of faith, not as subjects for doubtful disputation. They are made known to us for our salvation, not for the indulgence of unhallowed speculation. Vain man would be wise, but "the world by wisdom knew not God." "All your children shall be taught of God and great shall be the peace of your children," is the sweet promise made to the Church in every age. Eve wished to be wiser than infinite wisdom ordained, and her knowledge was dearly bought. Eden, with all its holiness and happiness, its peace and joy, was lost; a thorny wilderness, with cares and sorrows, disease and death, became her portion. Learn, then, O my soul! to bow with child-like submission before the Great Eternal. Though clouds and darkness veil his vast designs; Judgment and Justice form the basis of his throne-

"Not angels that stand round the Lord

Can search his secret will,

Yet they perform his heavenly word,

And sing his praises still!"

Go, and do you likewise, relying on Him who has said, "My grace is sufficient for you."

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