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Be Strong!

"Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the Kingdom of His dear Son."

Colossians 2:13



"And they sung a new song, saying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof: for thou was slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation.

And hast made us unto our God kings, and priests and we shall reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:9-10).

The word *redeem* in the Greek is **exagorazo** and it means "to buy back or buy out

of the market." The agora was Greek market. The picture here is the Roman slave market. In the time of the Bible's setting, Rome ruled the world, and in her power to conquer, she took many slaves. In this verse the Holy Ghost is using the metaphor of the Roman slave market where all the slaves were sold. This is what happened in the family of mankind: Adam and Eve, blessed in the

Garden, disobeyed God. When they did, they were sold into slavery and became Satan's slaves. They broke God's law; consequently, they were under the debt of God's law, were sold into slavery, and Satan and sin ruled over them.

One commentator quoting on this verse said, "When Adam and Eve sinned, they ran up to Satan and gave him the I.O.U.s to the debt of the broken law." And Satan used the I.O.U.s to bring Adam and all of his posterity into his slave market of sin

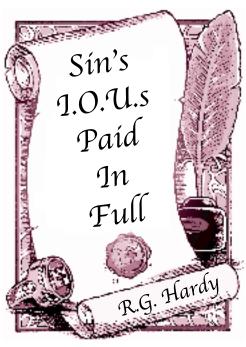
and ruled over them. That's the picture of unregenerate man, sold into slavery, sold into sin, under the dominance and bondage of Satan and sin and demonic powers.

A Roman slave could not own any property. In fact, he was just like a piece of furniture. He belonged to his master without any rights and was under the dominance of his master. His master could do whatever he wanted with him. That's the way

sinful mankind is: He has no rights, sold under sin, and Satan is his master. The devil does anything he wants with them, and his ultimate goal is after he torments them and abuses them and uses them in his rebellion against God, is to see them destroyed in Hell. He is the lord of all unsaved mankind, and you and I, when we weren't saved, were in that condition, with no hope of getting

out. One that is in sin is helpless to get himself out. He is a slave. Therefore, he has no means and no ability to pay his I.O.U.s. Nothing that he can do can pay the debt.

You see, that's what is wrong with the "gospel of works." The gospel of works does not work. Man cannot buy his way out of the slave market of sin controlled by the devil. He has nothing to buy himself out with. Man is totally and absolutely spiritually bankrupt. He does not have the price. He is a slave. He has no rights. He



has no money. He has no ability. He can own nothing. He's hopelessly and seemingly helplessly lost in the power of Satan and sin. But oh, Thank God, God in His infinite love and mercy found the way and the price to redeem and buy man back out of sin and the slave market of Satan.

THE PRECIOUS PRICE

Silver and gold couldn't do it. 1 Peter 1: 18: "For as much as ye know that you were not redeemed with such corruptible things as silver and gold..." Silver and gold can't do it, and I'm glad that silver and gold can't do it. You know why? Because the rich would be cornering the market on salvation and redemption like they have on everything else. We poor and ordinary common folk wouldn't have it because the rich with their silver and gold would be having it and wasting it. When God put out the scales of eternity and put one soul on it, He put all of the silver and gold on the scales, but it wasn't enough to buy one soul.

It wasn't enough to redeem us from sin and the power of the devil. He put the cattle on the thousand hills, but it didn't move the scale. He put the whole earth on the scale, but it didn't move. Jesus said, "What should it profit a man if he gained the whole world and lose his soul?" All the wealth of the world couldn't do it. Good works couldn't do it, because you see, that was the function of a slave: to be a slave and work for his master, and he got no reward for it. He received no compensation for it.

The Lord gave a parable about a slave working in the field (Lk.17:7-10), and after he finished working in the field, instead of coming to eat, he came and fixed his master's meal. He served his master. After that, Jesus said to say, "I'm an unprofitable servant."

Works can't do it. That's what is

wrong with this works-salvation, it doesn't work. Titus 3:5, "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy, He saved us by the washing of regeneration of renewing of the Holy Ghost."

You can't earn your way to Heaven. You're going to have to be bought up by God. God is the only One that can buy us out. God is the only One that has the price. Not one human being has the price to redeem mankind, because "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. And there's none that doeth good, no not one." Salvation is outside of the realm of mankind. He doesn't have the price. He doesn't have the ability. He cannot be the sacrifice, because God's law demanded a sinless, perfect life, and there's not a human that is sinless and perfect.

The only One that could redeem or buy man out of the slave market of Satan and sin, was God Himself. God is the only One that has the price. "For by grace are you saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast" (Gal. 2:8-9). If we could work our way out, then we wouldn't owe God anything. But we cannot work our way out, and we owe God everything. It's by grace, the free gift, that we are purchased out of the slave market of sin and Satan.

God saw all of those pitiful slaves; I was one of them. A lot of you here were one of them, and He knew we had not the price. He knew we had not the ability. He knew we didn't have the means. We were doomed forever to be a slave and work for our master, Satan. You know, sin has a wage, and Satan is going to pay off all of his slaves: "For the wages of sin is death..." We were working everyday for our pay check of death, but God came on that scene. He saw our hopelessness and

helplessness. His bowels of compassion were stirred up. His love was kindled, and with eyes of love and mercy and grace, He looked upon us, pitiful slaves, and He did something about it. He was going to pay the price. He was going to redeem us out of the slave market and set us free: "...but the gift of God is eternal life..." (Rom. 6:23).

THE LAW OF REDEMPTION

Now in order to do this, God had to get into the human family. There were three requirements to be a redeemer: First of all, the redeemer had to be of the same kind. In order for God to redeem us, He had to become one of us. Second, he had to want to do it, and third, he had to have the means or the price to do it. God was the only One that had the price, that had the means, and He would become one of the same kind, because He wanted to do it: "God so loved the world that He gave the price, His only Begotten Son." I like this John 3:16, but I also like the fact that Jesus, Who was the Word of God at that time, wanted to do it. God could never give Him as His only Begotten Son, if the Word didn't want to become one of us; unless the Word was willing to get into the human family, and that's what happened.

John 1:1-3 & 10: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was also God or deity. (He had the nature of God.) And all things were made by Him; and there was not anything made that He had not made it. He was in the world, and the world was made by Him, and the world knew Him not."

He made all things, this Word. He was God's intermediate agent in creation. Not one thing came into being except He spoke it into being. In the 8th chapter of Proverbs, He said that He was there when the morning stars sang together and the

sons of God shouted for joy, when the foundation of the earth was laid, and He said, "My delight was with the sons of men." Yes, He loved us from the beginning! Jesus loved us from the beginning. From the very moment that He created the first man, His heart was with mankind and He loved them.

When He looked at that slave market, at the slaves of mankind under the cruel slave masters and saw our suffering, His bowels of compassion and His love were stirred up, and He said, "I am willing, I am willing to redeem them, and I have the price!"

For the price was a sinless and a spotless lamb! We were not redeemed with corruptible things, silver and gold, but with the precious blood of the Lamb of God, the Lord Jesus Christ, crucified, slain from the foundation of the world. Now, blood typifies life in the Scriptures. Lev. 17:11 says, "For the life of the flesh is in the blood;" (The blood contains the life of the flesh.) "And I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for the soul: for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the soul."

No wonder the song writer wrote that wonderful song, "What shall wash away my sins? Nothing but the blood of Jesus. What shall make me whole again? Nothing but the blood of Jesus." You see, the Law demanded a sinless, perfect, spotless life. It demanded a sinless, perfect, spotless sacrifice, and not one man could fulfill it. "For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God" (Rom. 3:23). The only One that could fulfill it was God Himself. Therefore, John declared: "And the Word was made flesh." Now, this is a bad translation; He wasn't made anything! The Greek says, "And the Word became flesh." The Word added on flesh, "and He dwelt amongst us. And we beheld His glory (or His recognition) as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:4)

God was the only One who could do it: He had to be willing and He had to be able, and He had to be of the same kind. And God loved us so much that He was willing to become one of us. What a terrible scene of mankind that He stepped into. It started out so beautiful: God created everything beautiful. Then He said, "Let us make man in our image and after our likeness." The Holy Spirit proceeded to sculpture out a likeness of God, and the Father, El Shaddai, breathed the breath of life into him. He woke up in the presence of God without a sense of inferiority, not being out of place, because he was in the image and likeness of God. Everything was beautiful; everything was good for after every day of creation, God said, "And it was good." The Hebrew word TOV can also be translated, "And it was beautiful." Oh, life was beautiful, and I tell you what, life can be beautiful again for you, O Sinner!

I would have liked to have been there and been Adam when God breathed the breath of life in him and he became alive. I would have liked to have been Adam when he smelled the first aroma of all of the beautiful flowers and herbs in the Garden and heard the beautiful sounds of creation in harmony. But sin came in and marred this beautiful creation, and "by one man's sin, death was passed on to every man" (Romans 5:12).

Therefore, we owe God a wage: For the wages of sin is death..." (Rom.6:23). The I.O.U.s of our sins made us slaves to Satan, but God came on that scene and saw us in the slave market, helpless and hopeless, never to be able to get out on our own, and He stirred up His bowels of compassion and said, "I'm going to redeem them," because only He could furnish the price. Only He could satisfy the debt of

our I.O.U.s for our sins, and He wanted to do it, and He was going to become one of the same kind, because the Word took on humanity. I want to paraphrase what Paul said in Phil. 2:5:

"Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus the Lord, who being in the form (or the essence) of God, thought it not robbery (a big thing) that he was equal with God. But he made himself of no reputation and took upon him the form (or the essence) of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man. And being found in the habit of man, he became humble and obedient to the death, even death of the cross."

Iesus laid aside His divine God-form and essence and took upon Him the essence of a servant, a slave. God had to be one like us in order to redeem us. Therefore Jesus became a slave, if you please. He not only became a human being, but He became a slave to the lowest degree, even to death, the ignoble death of the cross, because He loved us, because He wanted to, and because He had the price to redeem us. John 1:14, "And the Word" (Who is now Jesus Christ) "became human." He took on our same nature. He became one of us to sit where we have to sit, to walk where we have to walk, to be under the same conditions and circumstances. And the Word became flesh and dwelt amongst us.

HE SKINNED AMONGST US

Now this Greek word *dwelt* is a very special word. Most every other translation translates it, "He **tabernacled** amongst us." In the Old Testament, the tabernacle where the Holy of Holies was and where God's presence was manifested, was made out of goat and sheep skin. In the Old Testament, God dwelt in goat and sheep' skins, but in the New Testament, *God dwells in*

human skin. The Greek word for dwelt is skene, and it means "to pitch a tent." I like to translate it: "The Word skinned amongst us." He spread His tabernacle and tent of human skin and dwelt amongst us. John said, "And we went up to the tent door and looked inside and beheld His Shekinah. We beheld His glory. We beheld His recognition, the only Begotten of the Father."

Jesus took on human skin and came on down and walked amongst us. Now, if we take the word skene and change the k to c we get the English word scene. "He came on the scene of mankind." Our scene was terrible. The scene of mankind from the sin of fallen Adam and Eve became terrible, because immediately Satan came in to the Paradise of God, took the I.O.U.s of the debt of God's broken law and usurped the authority over man and made him a slave to sin, to demons, and to paying the wages of sin, which is death. It was a terrible scene of sickness, disease, fear, dominion of demons, but Jesus "scened" amongst us. He came on the scene to change the scene! He was going to rewrite the script!

John said, "We beheld—we were spectators of this great, spectacle. It is very interesting that the Greek word for beheld is theoreo, and we get our English word theater from it. There was the world: a theater of all kinds of scenes, and the scene of mankind was terrible, and the end of his story and the last scene was to be cast alive into the Lake of Fire, where there is weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth. But a new director came on the scene, and He was going to change that scene. He ordered the stage writers to change the scene from defeat to victory, from death to life, from suffering to glory, and from slavery to sonship. He changed the scene, and John and the apostles stood back and said, "We were spectators of the spectacle of our Kinsman Redeemer, that

was one of us and like us, and desired our deliverance and had the price, and came on the scene and changed it."

He came on the scene and said "Be of good cheer: I'm going to show you the way out of slavery. Be of good cheer, I'm going to make the way. For I am the Way and the Truth and the Life (John 14:6). I am the Price! Look at Me; I'm one of you. Just come unto Me, all you that are laboring, trying to buy your way into salvation, and you don't have the price, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn of Me. I'm meek and lowly of heart and My yoke is easy. My burden is light, and you shall find rest for your soul" (Matt. 11:28-30).

He has redeemed us! "There's a song in my heart that the angels can't sing, Redeemed! Redeemed! There's a new found joy that the world can't bring, Redeemed! Redeemed! I've been washed in the Blood of the Lamb."

It cost God something to redeem us. The word redeem means to buy back with a price." God had to pay a price. Man didn't have the price. All his good works and religions failed. They don't work, because they can't pay the price. One can present all his seemingly good works, but the Law refuses it. The Law says there has to be a perfect, spotless, obedient sinless life to pay the price. Without the shedding of blood, without the giving of life, there is no remission of sin, there is no redemption. But God wanted to do it, and He saw us in the slave market. His bowels of compassion and love were stirred up, and God said, "I have the means, and I want to do it, and I'm going to become one of them, and I'm going to pay the price."

It was a very bitter and costly price. He left His home in glory that we might have a home in glory. He laid aside His equal-

ity with God that we might be a partaker of His divine nature. He laid aside His outward form of deity, and He took on humanity in its lowest form. Being the Creator and a ruler, He became a slave and humbled Himself. Being the giver of life, He died. He was that perfect sacrifice. All through His life, God testified of him, "Thou art My Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." He was that obedient, pleasing, holy, perfect sacrifice.

The Law was explicit; the sacrifice had to be without spot or blemish and holy. That's why He had to go to Pilate's Judgment Hall. The Old Testament high priest would take the knife and lay open, flay the sacrifice to see if there was any hidden disease. And in Pilate's Judgment Hall, on that whipping post, God flayed open and laid bare the soul of Jesus to show that there was no hidden malice. Isaiah said, "As a sheep before his shearer is dumb, He opened not his mouth." He didn't bring a railing accusation, because He loved us and He knew that He had to be one of us, and He had to be perfect to redeem us. He loved us and He willingly received the stripes of the cat-o-nine tails, the scourging, the thorns, the mocking, and finally, the crucifixion.

BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD

Satan thought he was getting rid of his enemy on that cross, but instead, Jesus on the cross as the perfect sacrifice was getting rid of the devil and sin and sickness and sorrow and grief, and paying the price to redeem His loved ones. We're redeemed by the Precious Blood of the Lamb. John spotted Him and said, "He skinned amongst us: He came on our terrible scene, and we beheld, we were spectators of His glory." The word glory means recognition. John recognized Him and said, "Behold, the Lamb of God that takes away the sins

of the world."

Finally, He came to the time and the place to pay the price, and they nailed Him to His altar, because Jesus used the cross to span the gap between Heaven and earth for all of the world. Satan thought he was getting rid of his antagonizer, but Jesus was getting rid of the devil and his demons and their power to hold mankind in sway. In Colossians 2:13-14 is the scene of redemption and the place where the price is paid:

"And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened (made alive) together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses; Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross."

The handwriting of ordinances was the I.O.U.s of our debt to the broken commandments of God. In Bible times if a person was a debtor, a notice of his debts was nailed to the gate of the city where he lived to show that he was a debtor, to try to shame him into paying his debts. Paul used this metaphor to show that our sinful debts had been nailed to the door post of eternity for the angels and all creation to see. What gave the devil power to hold mankind as slaves in the slave market? It was the I.O.U.s of man's sinful, disobedience to God's Law. Paul said, "We were debtors to the law." We owed the Law the debt of our life, and Satan held the unpaid debt, and we were in his clutches. By that debt, he made us dance to his tune. We had no way out; we were slaves with no rights. God loved us and did something about it. He gave His Son, Jesus, and the Word took on our skin and our flesh. He was going to change the scene of defeat to a scene of victory. And the scene was the cross of the Great Redeemer.

Satan thought it was a cruel cross of a

curse, but the cross isn't a curse for me, and the cross isn't a curse for the millions of Saints that have received Iesus as their Saviour. It's the place of all blessing; it's the fount of salvation and eternal life, because that is where the price was paid. Jesus offered Himself while His body was hanging on the cross, sinless, spotless and without blemish, as the lamb under the Old Testament. When the blood was shed, the Lord released His spirit, stepped into the Holy Place in heaven, put on His High Priest robe, and offered up the price to God. He took our statement of death, the handwriting of ordinances contained in the commandments that were contrary to us and against us, and He nailed it to His cross. And the blood, the life that ran out of His hands and His fingers and His head, ran down over that debt: and washed it away. Then the Glorious Son of God took His finger of eternity and wrote on that debt, Paid in Full. "I call all of the I.O.U.s in, and they are Paid in Full." He offered Himself as the atoning sacrifice.

"How much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works (works that bring death) to serve the living God?" (Hebrews 9:14). He offered Himself without spot, without blemish and that blood cleansed our conscience, cleansed our souls, and removed the power of sin. Then He went on a journey, and He led all the righteous from eternity out of Hades and presented them to Almighty God:

"Wherefore he saith, When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, and gave gifts unto men. (Now that he ascended what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things)" (Ephesians 4:8-10).

He descended into the lower parts of the earth where the Death Angel had the authority over death. Before Jesus came and paid the price, even though one was righteous when he died, he couldn't go into God's presence. He had to go into Hades house called Abraham's Bosom where the beggar Lazarus went when he died. The rich man in the torment and flames of Hell or Gehenna lifted up his eyes and saw Lazarus in Abraham's Bosom (Luke 16:19 -26). Abraham and Lazarus were not in the presence of the Lord, because Satan still had the power of death. Hebrews 2:14-15 reveals that all of the Old Testament Saints were all of their life time living in fear of death, because of him that had the power of death, Satan:

"Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

On that sacrifical day when Jesus offered Himself, He went on a journey. He descended into the lower parts of the earth, and He went down to Hades house where He ripped the gates off its hinges. In Matthew 16:18, Jesus declared:

"...And the gates of hell shall not prevail against it—the church." The Greek word for hell here is not gehenna—hell fire, but hades which is the place where the righteous souls since Abel were held until Jesus came to pay the price for their release. It is the same as Abraham's Bosom or Paradise.

IT IS FINISHED!

Jesus decended into Hades House, ripping the gates off, and He nailed the receipt of His reconciling death on the gate

post. He went up to the Death Angel, took the keys to death, hell and the grave, and out of the other hand He took the I.O.U.s for our sins. By that time, Isaiah spotted Him and said, "Rise and shine for thy light has come." And Job jumped up and said, "I told you my Redeemer liveth, and I see Him for my own self in this day."

After He descended into the lower parts of the earth, then He ascended on high, and on the way up He stopped and gave gifts to the Church, apostles and prophets, evangelists and pastors, and teachers. He ascended on high, leading captivity captivated, because He captivated those captive souls in Hades house with His love and mercy and grace. They followed Him and He led them into the presence of Almighty God. He stopped into the Holy of Holies not made with hands, with His High Priest robes on, and with His own blood, He sprinkled the Mercy Seat in Heaven. Thereby God paid eternal salvation for us. He said to the Father, "Here are the I.O.U.s Paid in Full! It is finished!"

In the Greek the third person can be translated *he, she* or *it.* I like to translate this in the masculine third person: "He is finished!" Satan is finished! He no more can be the slave master over these Saints unless they let him. Nothing else has to be done. The price is paid.

That's the last thing Jesus said on the cross, "It is finished," and offered Himself without spot or blemish as a lamb verily or truly slain from the foundation of the world. The Father smelled a sweet smelling savor of a sacrifice acceptable, and He turned from His face of anger and retribution, and He turned towards us with smiles and love and salvation and victory. It is finished. It is done. You don't have to try to do anything. You can't add anything to it. It's been paid. The devil is finished:

Jesus spoiled principalities and powers by the cross when He nailed our I.O.U.s on the cross. and His blood, His life washed the debt away.

He went to the demonic principalities and powers and satanic forces that overlorded us and kept us in bondage, and He *spoiled* them. The word *spoil* in the Greek means that He *stripped* them like they strip a soldier when running him out of the army. They literally rip his uniform apart and strip him of his authority. Jesus stripped all of the demons, all of the principalities, all the powers, all the satanic forces, even the general, Satan himself, of the power to hold mankind. For the power were the I.O.U.s of our sins, and they were paid for!

Then Jesus took that cross and turned it into a chariot of victory. Colossians 2:15 says that "He stripped them and spoiled them openly, trimuphing over them in it (the cross)." And the picture is that of a Roman general fighting the wars of Rome and conquering the enemy, capturing the king and all of his nobles. He would chain them to his chariot, and on the day that he would be afforded his victory parade, all of Rome would line the streets with music and flowers. He and his chariot would drive these conquered, defeated foes before him. All of the citizens would holler out, "Hail Marcus Victus! Hail O' mighty conquering general."

And Jesus stridled His chariot, the cross, chained with all of the demonic powers, principalities and Satan and drove them before Him through the courts of Heaven, and the angels lined the streets and cried out, "Hosanna, Blessed is He that comes in the Name of the Lord. Blessed is the conquering Jesus. All hail the power of Jesus' Name. Let angels prostrate fall."

He triumphed over them! He led them in triumph! He exposed them to the world that they were usurpers and had no right and no power. In fact, they were defeated foes, conquered by the Mighty Conqueror, the Lord Jesus Christ. And now that we have accepted Him as our Saviour and Lord, we join Him on that chariot and He leads us in triumph. *Now "we are more than conquerors through Him that have loved us!"* (Rom. 8:37).

When Jesus appeared before the Father, and the Father accepted the I.O.U.s, then the Father said, "Send the message out to all humanity and all creation that the price has been paid, and the I.O.U.s have been called in: Man is free!"

That's what you and I, as ministers and children of God, ought to do: To proclaim out to all of creation that we are redeemed. For God has redeemed the world. For Jesus is the propitiation, "not only for our sins, but of the whole world." (1Jn. 2:2). Propitiation means the satisfying price. Jesus is the satisfying price that satisfied God for the whole world, and as far as God is concerned, all the I.O.U.s for the whole world were paid for at Calvary and called in and wiped away, torn up and removed as far as

the east is from the west.

It's our job to go out and tell them, "O' Sinner, you've been redeemed. The price has been paid. Your I.O.U.s are called in. Satan has no legal right over you." This is a legal matter: We broke the legal law of God, and the legal sentence was death. But the legal price was paid in Christ, and the legal verdict of redemption and freedom has been declared. Declare it in all the land: "To the utmost Jesus saves!" Tell them all they have to do is accept Him: Accept His paid price, His finished work, and they will enjoy the blessings of redemption.

Sinner Friend, Backslider, you don't have to stay in that slave scene. Jesus has come on the scene. He's paid the price. He's offered the sacrifice. It's been accepted. The I.O.U.s have been called in. God has stamped the blood of Jesus on your debt, "Paid in Full."

Christian Friend, your calling is to glorify God in your body and in your spirit, which is the temple of the Holy Ghost: "For ye are bought with a price" (1 Cor. 6:19-20).