

Redeems
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Allen Power

Jeremiah 31:23-24

Let's talk about a couple of words that have both "everyday" meanings and important biblical meanings. Let's start with the word "redeem" or "redemption." How is that word used in everyday life (not "Sunday School" meanings, just everyday life)?

What about the word, "covenant?" How is that word used in everyday life?

We come to church and we hear that word "redeemed, we sing about being redeemed but do we know what it really means when God does the redeeming? We will this morning! We hear about covenants God has made with humanity. In particular, we hear about the Old Covenant and in this text, the New Covenant. What is that new covenant all about? We'll find out in this study.

If you pulled out your dictionary app and looked up "redeem" here are the first two definitions:

1 a: to buy back: repurchase **b:** to get or win back

2: to free from what distresses or harms: as

a: to free from captivity by payment of ransom **b:** to extricate from or help to overcome something detrimentalⁱ

If you haven't noticed yet in this study, Judah was in the midst of "something detrimental" (captivity) and needed extrication. They were in a mess (due to their own sin) and needed a way out; and so does every human being ever born.

When we redeem a coupon, the merchant lowers the price. Christ offers redemption from sin because He already PAID the price by His death on the cross. When people make covenants, they often go back on their word. When God makes a covenant He never breaks His promise.

The Point: Because of sin we are all born into a mess but Christ our redeemer has paid our ransom. Under God's New Covenant with people, we not only get out of prison we become His child; redemption becomes relationship.

Jeremiah chapters 30-33 represent a turning point in this book. In these chapters God begins to tell the rebellious people of Judah His plan to free them from captivity in Babylon and restore them to Jerusalem. Last week in Jeremiah 29:11 He said He had great plans for His people; here He began to reveal those plans. In chapter 31 His future vision goes way beyond just restoring them to Jerusalem. This prophecy from God came to Jeremiah in a dream. Let's begin with verse 23 of Jeremiah 31. Reading from the New Living Translation.

23 This is what the Lord of Heaven's Armies, the God of Israel, says: "When I bring them back from captivity, the people of Judah and its towns will again say, 'The Lord bless you, O righteous home, O holy mountain!' **24** Townspeople and farmers and shepherds alike will live together in peace and happiness. **25** For I have given rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing." **26** At this, I woke up and looked around. My sleep had been very sweet. **27** "The day is coming," says the Lord, "when I will greatly increase the human population and the number of animals here in Israel and Judah. **28** In the past I deliberately uprooted and tore down this nation. I overthrew it, destroyed it, and brought disaster upon it. But in the future I will just as deliberately plant it and build it up. I, the Lord, have spoken!

- Sometimes we have dreams so bad we are thrilled to wake up! Sometimes our dreams are so interesting we want to go back to sleep to see how it ends. Sometimes dreams are so sweet we wake up smiling.
- God's plans for Judah's restoration made for "sweet sleep" for Jeremiah.
- People of all types would live together in "peace and happiness."
- There would be "rest to the weary and joy to the sorrowing."
- God had delivered judgment for their sin, now He would restore them.
- After verse 28 there is an unusual turn in God's message. Clearly God was talking about Judah's immediate deliverance from Babylon and even the reuniting of the divided Northern and Southern kingdoms, but it seems like this message was looking further into the future.
- That turn in the message is taken by an unusual saying in verse 29.

29 "The people will no longer quote this proverb: 'The parents have eaten sour grapes, but their children's mouths pucker at the taste.'

- "Excuse me, what?" Apparently, the people were misinterpreting Exodus 20:5b where God said, "I the Lord your God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and the fourth generation of those who hate me..."ⁱⁱ
- The people: "*We're in this mess because we're being punished for Daddy and Mama's sins! We're just poor victims.*" Verse 30 clears it up.

God said, **30** All people will die for their own sins—those who eat the sour grapes will be the ones whose mouths will pucker.

- Every person will be held accountable for his or her own sin. Don't blame your ancestors for your sin and the flip side, just because Granny was saved doesn't mean you are saved. It's every sinner for his or her self.
- Here is where God's bedtime message to Jeremiah gets really exciting.

31 "The day is coming," says the Lord, "when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and Judah. **32** This covenant will not be like the one I made with

their ancestors when I took them by the hand and brought them out of the land of Egypt. They broke that covenant, though I loved them as a husband loves his wife,” says the Lord.

- Let’s pause for some context. The “every day” meaning of covenant is an agreement between two people. What about divine covenants from God? Basically, *“Biblical covenants spell out what God will do.”*ⁱⁱⁱ
- The “old covenant” God refers to in Jeremiah 31:32 relates to **Deuteronomy 30:15–18 (NLT) — 15** “Now listen! Today I am giving you a choice between life and death, between prosperity and disaster. **16** For I command you this day to love the Lord your God and to keep his commands, decrees, and regulations by walking in his ways. If you do this, you will live and multiply, and the Lord your God will bless you and the land you are about to enter and occupy. **17** “But if your heart turns away and you refuse to listen, and if you are drawn away to serve and worship other gods, **18** then I warn you now that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live a long, good life in the land you are crossing the Jordan to occupy.
- *God: “You keep the law I gave to Moses and he gave to you, and I will bless you and protect you. Break my law and you pay the price.”*
- *The people: “What if we mess up? After all, we’re only human?”*
- *God: “Take an approved sacrifice to the priest in the temple and I’ll forgive you.”*
- Keeping the law, going to God through a priest, animal sacrifices when you mess up: That was the old (Mosaic) covenant.

33 “But this is the new covenant I will make with the people of Israel after those days,” says the Lord. “I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. **34** And they will not need to teach their neighbors, nor will they need to teach their relatives, saying, ‘You should know the Lord.’ For everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me already,” says the Lord. “And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”

- How was the new covenant radically different than the old covenant? How did the new covenant change how people relate to God? How would having God’s “instructions” implanted in our hearts help us live for Him?
- The final sentence is key: *“I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”*
- *“Wow! This new covenant is amazing but who pays for all this?”*
- Jesus answered that in **Luke 22:20 (NLT) — 20** After supper he took another cup of wine and said, “This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood, which is poured out as a sacrifice for you.
- Back to that word, “redeem.” One commentator explains: *“The word redeem means “to buy out.” The term was used specifically in reference to*

the purchase of a slave's freedom. The application of this term to Christ's death on the cross is quite telling. If we are "redeemed," then our prior condition was one of slavery. God has purchased our freedom, and we are no longer in bondage to sin or to the Old Testament law."^{iv}

- **Romans 3:23–25 (NLT) — 23** For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard. **24** Yet God, in his grace, freely makes us right in his sight. He did this through Christ Jesus when he freed us from the penalty for our sins. **25** For God presented Jesus as the sacrifice for sin. People are made right with God when they believe that Jesus sacrificed his life, shedding his blood. This sacrifice shows that God was being fair when he held back and did not punish those who sinned in times past,
- Jesus was the sacrifice to redeem us. He paid the price for our sin debt.
- As if forgiveness for sin wasn't enough. There's MORE.
- **Ephesians 1:4–7 (ESV) —4...**In love **5** he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, **6** to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. **7** In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace,
- Not only can we be forgiven for our sins (past, present, and future) and freed from slavery to want to sin, God is willing to adopt us as His children because Jesus paid the price in His blood on the cross. *"In Him we have redemption."*
- Redemption or "buying back" is sort of like someone coming bailing you out of jail, securing a pardon for you, and then taking you home as their kid. It's actually even better than that. It's like being on death row for a crime you really committed and having someone come in and say, *"I'll go the 'chair' so you can be free and go live with my Father."*
- No one would do that! No one but Jesus!

So, What's the Takeaway?

- Because of sin we are all born into a mess but Christ our redeemer has paid our ransom. Under God's New Covenant with people, we not only get out of prison we become His child; redemption becomes relationship.
- If we've trusted Christ we don't need a priest to get to God the Father because Jesus is our High Priest and we have direct contact through Him.
- Christ not only wants to redeem us He wants relationship with us.
- He will give us His Holy Spirit living in us to read the "instructions" to us from inside our heart and mind so we can obey and please God.
- The Old Covenant sacrifices only temporarily removed sins. Christ's death on the cross has paid the price for the sins of all mankind FOREVER.
- How do people receive the benefits of this New Covenant program? We just have to realize we need it, confess we don't deserve it (our sin), and trust that Jesus Has paid for it.
- This week I read an Oswald Chambers devotion that spoke to this: *"If Jesus Christ is only a teacher, then all He can do is frustrate me by setting a standard before me I cannot attain... But when I am born again by the*

Spirit of God, I know that Jesus Christ did not come only to teach— He came to make me what He teaches I should be. The redemption means that Jesus Christ can place within anyone the same nature that ruled His own life, and all the standards God gives us are based on that nature.”

- God said it plainly: *“I will put my instructions deep within them, and I will write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people ... everyone, from the least to the greatest, will know me...And I will forgive their wickedness, and I will never again remember their sins.”*
- That is the New Covenant. It was paid for by Christ’s blood. That is redemption in Christ.

ⁱ Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). [*Merriam-Webster’s collegiate dictionary*](#). (Eleventh

ⁱⁱ [*The Holy Bible: English Standard Version*](#). (2016). (Ex 20:5). Wheaton, IL:

Crossway Bibles.

ⁱⁱⁱ Richards, L. O. (1991). [*The Bible reader’s companion*](#) (electronic ed., p. 466).

Wheaton: Victor Books.

^{iv} <https://www.gotquestions.org/redemption.html>