

# Redemption

## Jesus-Style Redemption in the Gospels



### SESSION 6

- SESSION 1**    **Redemption From Enslavement**
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The New Testament gospel writers talk about Israel's redemption happening through Jesus, who offers his life as a redemption payment that liberates people from enslavement to sin and death, bringing them into the freedom of true life.

#### **Step 1: Consider Key Question**

How do the New Testament gospels anticipate the way redemption happens through Jesus?

## Step 2: Read Scripture

Start by exploring three passages from the Gospels.

### Luke 1:67-75

#### *Zechariah's Prophecy*

<sup>67</sup> And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying,  
<sup>68</sup> “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,  
for he has visited and redeemed his people  
<sup>69</sup> and has raised up a horn of salvation for us  
in the house of his servant David,  
<sup>70</sup> as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,  
<sup>71</sup> that we should be saved from our enemies  
and from the hand of all who hate us;  
<sup>72</sup> to show the mercy promised to our fathers  
and to remember his holy covenant,  
<sup>73</sup> the oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us  
<sup>74</sup> that we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear,  
<sup>75</sup> in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.  
<sup>76</sup> And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;  
for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,  
<sup>77</sup> to give knowledge of salvation to his people  
in the forgiveness of their sins,  
<sup>78</sup> because of the tender mercy of our God,  
whereby the sunrise shall visit us<sup>[h]</sup> from on high  
<sup>79</sup> to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death,  
to guide our feet into the way of peace.”

### Luke 2:36-38

<sup>36</sup> And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, <sup>37</sup> and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.<sup>[i]</sup> She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. <sup>38</sup> And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

### Mark 10:42-45

<sup>42</sup> And Jesus called them to him and said to them, “You know that those who are considered rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. <sup>43</sup> But it shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant,<sup>[j]</sup> <sup>44</sup> and whoever would be first among you must be slave<sup>[k]</sup> of all. <sup>45</sup> For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

## Step 4: Collect Insights

Explore some key insights from these passages.

Word Definition: *Lutrosis* / *Lutron*

The Septuagint is an early Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible that the New Testament authors used. In it, the Greek noun *lutrosis* represents both of the Hebrew root words for redemption (*ga'al* and *padah*) that we learned about during earlier sessions. This helps us see how the New Testament authors can use *lutrosis* (see Luke 1:68, 2:38) to suggest the idea of repossessing someone back into the family (*ga'al*) or of restoring something lost or liberating a person from death (*padah*). *Lutron* is used for the Hebrew words *kopher* and *pidyon*, which refer to a “redemption payment” or “ransom” (see Mark 10:45).

**Lutrosis** (λύτρωσις) is a New Testament Greek word meaning redemption, ransoming, or liberation through a paid price. It describes the act of releasing a captive—specifically from the penalty of sin, slavery, or death—by paying a ransom, as seen in Hebrews 9:12, Luke 1:68, and Luke 2:38.

**The Greek word *lutron*** (λύτρον) means “ransom,” “redemption price,” or “the price to loosen”. It refers to the payment made to release a slave, prisoner of war, or captive. In the New Testament, it is used figuratively for the price Christ paid (His life) to set people free from sin.

### Key aspects of *lutrosis* include:

- **A Costly Ransom:** It emphasizes the deliverance of a helpless captive through a ransom payment.
- **Context of Sin and Salvation:** It is largely used in the Bible to describe Christ’s sacrifice as the payment for the release of humanity from the bondage of sin.
- **The Payment Act:** While *apolutrosis* often refers to the final release, *lutrosis* generally refers to the ransom payment itself.
- **Biblical Occurrences:** It appears in the New Testament only three times, all focusing on God's redemption (Luke 1:68, Luke 2:38, and Hebrews 9:12).

Notice how in the New Testament, a particular Greek word might be drawing on multiple Hebrew words or concepts. This reality helps us respect the value of trying to understand how the original audience would have understood these words.

## Story Context

Israel experiences a partial redemption from Babylonian exile when some of the people return to their land (see Ezra 1-2).

But centuries later, they’re still being dominated by an enemy ruler—now the Roman empire. By Jesus’ day in the 1st century C.E., Israel had long been waiting

for God to redeem them from their foreign overlords and set a powerful king on David's throne (see Isa. 9:1-7, 60:1-22).

An account from the opening of Luke's gospel, which takes place before Jesus had been born, connects Jesus and his story to this long-anticipated redemption. Zechariah, a priest who becomes the father of John the Baptizer, prophesies that God's "redemption" (Greek: *lutrosis*) has already begun. God has raised up a king in the line of David who will rescue his people (Luke 1:68-71). And a prophet named Anna, who has been praying and fasting in Jerusalem's temple for years, sees Jesus as a child and talks about him with everyone who is "looking forward to the redemption (*lutrosis*) of Jerusalem" (Luke 2:38). Anna sees Jesus as the one who will bring God's promise of redemption to fulfillment.

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## Summary - Luke 1:67-75

Luke 1:67-75 records the beginning of Zechariah's prophecy (also known as the *Benedictus*, from the Latin for "Blessed"). This is a Spirit-filled song of praise spoken by Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, shortly after John's birth and the restoration of Zechariah's speech (he had been mute for doubting the angel's announcement in Luke 1:5-25)

## Overall Meaning

Zechariah praises God for initiating the long-awaited redemption of His people Israel. He views the births of John and (imminently) Jesus as the fulfillment of Old Testament promises. The song emphasizes **God's faithfulness** to His covenants, His mercy, and the coming salvation that will deliver people so they can worship Him freely in holiness.

This is not primarily about John's birth alone. Zechariah focuses on the **Messiah** (Jesus) whom John will prepare the way for. The language draws heavily from the Hebrew Scriptures, linking the events to God's promises to David (a kingly savior) and Abraham (mercy and blessing to the nations through his offspring).

## Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

- **Verse 67:** Zechariah is "filled with the Holy Spirit" and prophesies. This echoes other Spirit-empowered praises in Luke 1 (e.g., Elizabeth in v. 41, Mary in the Magnificat). His words are inspired prophecy, not just personal thanks.
- **Verse 68:** "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel..." — A common way to begin praise (like many Psalms). God has "**visited**" (come near to, intervened for) and "**redeemed**" His people. This echoes God's past deliverances (e.g., the Exodus) but points forward to a greater redemption through the Messiah.
- **Verse 69:** God has "raised up a **horn of salvation**" in the house of David. "Horn" is an Old Testament image of power and strength (like a powerful animal's horn; see 1 Samuel 2:10, Psalm 18:2). This refers to **Jesus**, the

Messiah from David's royal line—not John (who was from the priestly line of Levi). It fulfills promises of a Davidic king who would bring salvation.

- **Verse 70:** This is "as he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old." Zechariah sees these events as the climax of centuries of prophetic promises.
- **Verse 71:** Salvation involves being "saved from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us." In the original Jewish context, this included political oppressors (e.g., Rome). In the broader Gospel fulfillment, it points to ultimate deliverance from sin, Satan, and death—the true enemies.
- **Verses 72-73:** The purpose is "to show the mercy promised to our fathers and to remember his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to our father Abraham." This directly recalls the **Abrahamic covenant** (Genesis 12, 15, 17, 22)—God's unbreakable promise of blessing, descendants, and land/legacy, rooted in mercy rather than human effort.
- **Verses 74-75:** The goal of this deliverance is that God's people, rescued from enemies, "might serve him **without fear**, in **holiness and righteousness** before him all our days." Salvation is not just escape; it's freedom for joyful, holy worship and obedient service to God. This shifts from fear of oppression (or judgment) to reverent service.

## Key Themes and Significance

- **God's Faithfulness:** After ~400 years of prophetic silence (since Malachi), God is acting to keep His word. The births of John and Jesus show He remembers His covenants.
- **Redemption and Salvation:** "Visited and redeemed" points to God's personal intervention. The "horn of salvation" is Jesus, who brings both deliverance and the ability to live righteously.
- **Mercy Over Merit:** Everything flows from God's tender mercy and ancient promises, not Israel's deserving.
- **Purpose of Salvation:** Freedom to serve God fearlessly in holiness. This has both immediate (first-century Jewish hope) and spiritual (forgiveness of sins, new life) dimensions, as the rest of the song (vv. 76-79) develops.
- **Connection to the Gospel:** This passage sets the stage for Luke's account. It roots Jesus' ministry in the Old Testament story, showing continuity: God is fulfilling what He promised through the prophets.

In Christian tradition, this song (the Benedictus) has been used in daily prayer (e.g., morning offices in many liturgies) as a reminder of God's dawn of salvation—"the sunrise from on high" that follows in verse 78.

## Application Today

Zechariah's words encourage believers to praise God for His faithfulness even when promises seem delayed. They remind us that salvation through Jesus delivers us from sin's power so we can live holy, fearless lives of service. It bridges the Old and New Testaments, showing Jesus as the climax of God's redemptive plan.

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## Summary of Luke 2:36-38

Luke 2:36-38 introduces us to **Anna** (also called a prophetess), the second witness (after Simeon in verses 25-35) who recognizes the infant Jesus as the long-awaited Messiah during His presentation at the temple in Jerusalem. This scene occurs about 40 days after Jesus' birth, when Mary and Joseph bring Him to the temple for the purification rites required by the Law of Moses (see Leviticus 12 and Luke 2:22-24).

### Overall Meaning

This short passage highlights God's faithfulness in revealing the Messiah to faithful, expectant people who have waited long and served diligently. Anna serves as a model of **devoted worship**, patient waiting, and joyful witness. Like Simeon, she confirms through the Holy Spirit that this baby is the One who brings redemption—not just political freedom for Israel, but ultimate spiritual deliverance.

Her story brackets the infancy narratives with praise and proclamation, showing that the arrival of Jesus fulfills the hopes of devout Jews who were "waiting for the consolation of Israel" (Simeon) and "the redemption of Jerusalem" (Anna).

### Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

- **Verse 36:** Anna is called a **prophetess**—one of the few women in the Bible given this title (others include Miriam, Deborah, and Huldah in the Old Testament). She is from the tribe of Asher (one of the northern tribes, often seen as "scattered" or less prominent), and her father Phanael's name means "face of God," suggesting a godly heritage. She had been married only seven years before becoming a widow and was now "advanced in years" (likely 84, or possibly 84 years as a widow, making her over 100 in some interpretations). This detail emphasizes her long life of faithfulness despite loss.
- **Verse 37:** Anna "did not depart from the temple" but lived a life of constant **worship**, marked by fasting and prayer "night and day." This doesn't mean she literally slept in the temple courts, but she was devoted to its ministry—likely spending most of her time there in service, intercession, and devotion. Her widowhood (common in that culture as a vulnerable state) did not lead to bitterness; instead, she channeled her life fully toward God.
- **Verse 38:** At the exact moment Mary and Joseph are in the temple with Jesus, Anna "coming up at that very hour" gives thanks to God and begins speaking about the child to all who were "waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem." Her response is immediate worship (thanksgiving) followed by proclamation. "Redemption" (Greek: *lytrōsis*) carries the idea of liberation or buying back from bondage—echoing God's past acts like the Exodus, but pointing to the greater salvation Jesus would bring from sin, oppression, and spiritual exile.

## Key Themes and Significance

- **Faithful Perseverance:** Anna's decades of prayer, fasting, and temple service show a life fully surrendered to God. Her waiting was active, not passive. God honors such devotion by allowing her to see and recognize the Messiah.
- **God's Timing and Revelation:** Just as with Simeon, the Holy Spirit orchestrates the "very hour" encounter. This underscores that Jesus' identity as the Redeemer is confirmed by multiple Spirit-led witnesses early in Luke's Gospel.
- **Worship, Witness, and Waiting:** Anna embodies these three: constant worship (fasting/prayer), joyful thanksgiving upon seeing Jesus, and bold speaking about Him to others who shared her hope. She doesn't keep the good news to herself.
- **Inclusion and Hope:** A woman from a lesser-known tribe, a long-time widow—yet God uses her prominently. Her hope for the "redemption of Jerusalem" reflects the broader Jewish expectation of the Messiah, which Luke shows is fulfilled in Jesus (for Israel and ultimately the Gentiles, as Simeon noted).
- **Contrast with Others:** While many in Israel missed Jesus, the faithful remnant (like Simeon and Anna) recognized Him because they knew the Scriptures and lived in expectant prayer.

This passage pairs beautifully with the previous one about Simeon (the *Nunc Dimittis*). Together, they bookend the temple scene, showing both male and female, old and devout, responding with praise to the arrival of salvation.

## Connection to the Broader Gospel

In Luke's account, these events root Jesus firmly in Jewish tradition and prophecy while pointing forward to His mission of redemption. Anna's proclamation foreshadows the spread of the good news. Theologically, it shows that true redemption comes not through human effort or political power, but through this humble child who would later die and rise for the forgiveness of sins.

## Application Today

Anna challenges us to:

- Devote ourselves to worship and prayer, even (especially) in seasons of loss, loneliness, or long waiting.
- Live with expectant hope for God's promises, without growing weary.
- Respond to encounters with Jesus with thanksgiving and by sharing the news of redemption with others who are seeking it.

Her life reminds us that a life spent in faithful service to God is never wasted—God sees, remembers, and rewards it in His perfect timing.

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## Summary - Mark 10:42-45

Mark 10:42-45 records one of Jesus' clearest teachings on **servant leadership** and the upside-down nature of His kingdom. This passage comes right after James and John boldly ask Jesus for the places of highest honor (right and left) in His coming glory (Mark 10:35-37). The other ten disciples become indignant, revealing their own competitive ambitions. Jesus uses the moment to correct their worldly mindset and point to His own mission.

## Overall Meaning

Jesus contrasts two completely different models of leadership and greatness:

- **Worldly/Gentile model** (v. 42): Rulers “lord it over” people and “exercise authority” in domineering, self-serving ways. This reflects the Roman Empire and typical human power structures—top-down control, status-seeking, and using position for personal benefit.
- **Kingdom model** (vv. 43-45): Greatness is redefined through humble service. The path to being “great” or “first” is to become a servant (*diakonos* – a table waiter or attendant) or even a slave (*doulos* – the lowest form of bondservant with no rights). Jesus Himself is the ultimate example.

The passage turns conventional ambition on its head: In God’s kingdom, you don’t climb by dominating others; you descend by serving them. True greatness is measured by how much you give yourself away for the good of others.

## Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

- **Verse 42:** Jesus acknowledges the familiar pattern of Gentile (non-Jewish) rulers. “Lord it over” (Greek *katakyrieuo*) implies harsh, oppressive control. Their “great ones” flex authority for their own glory. The disciples were likely thinking of political power in a restored Israel, similar to how earthly kings operated.
- **Verses 43-44:** “**But it shall not be so among you**” — a strong contrast. Jesus does not condemn all ambition or the desire for greatness; He redefines it.
  - “Whoever would be **great**... must be your **servant**.”
  - “Whoever would be **first**... must be **slave of all**.” This is radical: the highest status comes from the lowest posture. Service here is not occasional helpfulness but a fundamental orientation of life—putting others’ needs ahead of your own status or comfort.
- **Verse 45:** This is the theological heart and motivation for the teaching. “**For even the Son of Man**” (Jesus’ favorite self-title, drawn from Daniel 7 but here emphasizing humility) “came not to be served but to serve.” Jesus, who had every right to be served as Lord and King, instead lived as a servant—washing feet (John 13), healing the sick, teaching the crowds, and ultimately dying. The climax: “...and to **give his life as a ransom for many**.”

- “Ransom” (*lutron*) means a price paid to free a slave, prisoner, or captive. It carries the idea of substitution and redemption (echoing Old Testament ideas of redeeming the firstborn or slaves, and especially Isaiah 53’s Suffering Servant who bears the sins of many).
- “For many” does not mean “only some” but emphasizes the vast number of people redeemed (cf. Isaiah 53:11-12). Jesus’ death pays the price to free people from slavery to sin, guilt, Satan, and death.

Jesus’ servanthood is not just a moral example—it is effective. His sacrificial death actually accomplishes redemption, enabling His followers to live out the same servant spirit through the power of the gospel.

## Key Themes and Significance

- **Inverted Kingdom Values:** Power, status, and success in the church or Christian life are not like the world’s. Jesus repeatedly taught this (e.g., Mark 9:35; Luke 22:24-27), and it directly challenges pride, competition, and self-promotion among believers.
- **Jesus as the Model:** The passage is not primarily a leadership seminar but a call to follow Jesus’ pattern. His entire ministry and especially His death on the cross demonstrate servant leadership. Philippians 2:5-11 echoes this beautifully—Jesus humbled Himself to the point of death.
- **Motivation for Service:** We serve not to earn God’s favor, but because Jesus has already served us by giving His life as our ransom. Gratitude for the gospel fuels humble, sacrificial living.
- **Connection to the Cross:** This is one of the clearest statements in Mark’s Gospel about the purpose of Jesus’ death—atonement, substitutionary sacrifice. It foreshadows the events of Mark 14-15.

This teaching occurs on the road to Jerusalem, just before the Passion Week, making it especially powerful: Jesus is heading toward the ultimate act of service (the cross) while instructing His followers how to live in light of it.

## Application Today

- In **leadership** (church, family, work, community): Authority is given to serve, not to be served. Great leaders protect, equip, and lift others up rather than domineering or seeking personal glory.
- In **daily life**: Look for opportunities to be a “servant” or “slave of all”—putting spouses, children, coworkers, neighbors, or fellow believers first, even when it costs you time, comfort, or status.
- In **ambition**: It is not wrong to desire to be “great” in God’s eyes, but the path is downward in humility and outward in love.
- **Gospel Power**: Only the reality of what Jesus did for us (paying our ransom) can free us from self-centeredness and empower genuine servanthood.

This passage is a cornerstone for the Christian concept of **servant leadership**. It has shaped countless teachings on humility, ministry, and following Jesus.