

# Redemption

## Jesus-Style Redemption in the Letters



### SESSION 7

- SESSION 1**    **Redemption From Enslavement**
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The New Testament letters portray Jesus' redemption as a transformative rescue, restoring humans to God's family and empowering us to live as his holy people in the way, truth, and life of Jesus.

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

How do these passages from Romans, 1 Peter, and Hebrews help us understand Jesus' role in our redemption and the specific kind of redemption he accomplishes?

## Step 2: Read Scripture

Start by exploring three passages from New Testament letters.

### Romans 3:21-24

#### The Righteousness of God Through Faith

<sup>21</sup> But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup> for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,

### 1 Peter 1:13-21

#### Called to Be Holy

<sup>13</sup> Therefore, preparing your minds for action,<sup>ⓐ</sup> and being sober-minded, set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ. <sup>14</sup> As obedient children, do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance, <sup>15</sup> but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, <sup>16</sup> since it is written, “You shall be holy, for I am holy.” <sup>17</sup> And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, <sup>18</sup> knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup> but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup> He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup> who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

### Hebrews 9:11-15

#### Redemption Through the Blood of Christ

<sup>11</sup> But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) <sup>12</sup> he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption.<sup>13</sup> For if the blood of goats and bulls, and the sprinkling of defiled persons with the ashes of a heifer, sanctify for the purification of the flesh, <sup>14</sup> how much more will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself without blemish to God, purify our<sup>ⓐ</sup> conscience from dead works to serve the living God.

<sup>15</sup> Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.

## Step 4: Collect Insights

Explore some key insights from these passages.

### Story Context

In Hebrews 9:11-14, the author of Hebrews suggests that Jesus redeems people by offering his own blood as an atoning sacrifice. In the Hebrew Bible, priests used blood from sacrificed animals to cleanse the tabernacle or temple, which became defiled due to human wrongdoing. The priests regularly purified these holy spaces so that God’s presence could continue dwelling among his people (see Lev. 16).

Although we may associate redemption specifically with Jesus’ death (see Mark 10:45; Rom. 3:24-26), Hebrews 9 describes Jesus’ resurrection and ascension as the key moment of redemption. The author saw this as the moment when Jesus cleanses the heavenly holy of holies from the contamination and defilement of all human evil.

In Romans 3:21-24, Paul talks about humanity’s need for redemption from enslavement to the cosmic powers of sin and death. His “slave” language recalls Israel’s former enslavement in Egypt, but the redemption Paul describes is more than rescue from human oppressors. “All people” are corrupted and enslaved, says Paul (see Rom. 3:22-23, 6:6), which includes oppressors and victims alike. From Paul’s perspective, humanity’s deliverance from sin parallels Israel’s ancient redemption from slavery, but Jesus’ redemption is next-level.

In Exodus, Pharaoh had no legitimate claim over Israel, so God worked with Moses to stop evil and reclaim his people. Similarly, death has no legitimate claim over humanity, so in Jesus, God defeats death and reclaims his people, offering a way for all humanity to move through death and into a transformed life with him (Rom. 6:3-11).

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## Summary of Romans 3:21-24

Romans 3:21-24 forms one of the most important turning points in the entire Bible. It marks the shift from Paul’s devastating diagnosis of universal human sinfulness (Romans 1:18–3:20) to the glorious solution found in the gospel. This short paragraph is often called the heart of the gospel or the core of Pauline theology.

### Overall Meaning

After proving that **no one**—Jew or Gentile—is righteous before God by their own efforts or by keeping the law (Romans 3:9-20), Paul announces the good news: God has provided a **righteousness** that comes from Himself, received by faith alone, not by law-keeping. This righteousness is available to **all** people equally

because **all** have sinned. It is a free gift of grace, made possible by the redemptive work of Jesus Christ.

In these verses, Paul introduces three massive gospel concepts:

- **Justification** (being declared righteous in God’s court)
- **Redemption** (being set free from slavery to sin)
- **Grace** (undeserved favor)

This passage directly answers the question: “How can a holy God accept guilty sinners?”

## Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

- **Verse 21 – “But now...”**: These two words signal a dramatic change in salvation history. The long era of preparation under the law has given way to the new era of fulfillment in Christ. The **righteousness of God** refers primarily to God’s own saving activity—His faithful commitment to put sinners right with Himself while remaining perfectly just. It has now been **manifested** (publicly revealed, especially at the cross). This righteousness comes **apart from the law** (we cannot earn it by obeying rules or rituals), yet the Old Testament (Law and Prophets) already pointed forward to it (e.g., Genesis 15:6; Habakkuk 2:4; Isaiah 53).
- **Verse 22 – “through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe”**: This righteousness is received simply by trusting in Jesus Christ. Faith is the instrument or channel—not a work we perform to earn it. “For all who believe” and “there is no distinction” emphasize the universal offer: the same gospel applies equally to Jews and Gentiles. No ethnic, moral, or religious group has an advantage.
- **Verse 23 – “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”**: This repeats and summarizes the earlier verdict (Romans 3:9-20). “Sinned” means missing the mark, like an arrow failing to hit the target. “Fall short of the glory of God” means we were created to reflect God’s character and enjoy His presence, but sin has caused us to come tragically short. All humanity stands equally condemned—no one measures up.
- **Verse 24 – “and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus”**: Despite our guilt, believers **are justified** (declared “Not Guilty!” and credited with right standing before God). This happens:
  - **By his grace** — completely undeserved.
  - **As a gift** — freely given, not earned or purchased by us.
  - **Through the redemption** — the price paid by Christ. “Redemption” pictures a slave being bought out of bondage (common in the Roman world and echoing Israel’s deliverance from Egypt). Jesus’ death on the cross was the ransom price that sets us free from sin’s power, guilt, and penalty.

## Key Themes and Significance

- **The Righteousness of God:** Not primarily “our moral goodness,” but God’s saving power and covenant faithfulness displayed in Christ. God remains righteous (just) while making sinners righteous.
- **Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone:** Salvation is 100% God’s initiative. We contribute nothing except the empty hands of faith.
- **Universality:** Both the problem (sin) and the solution (justification) apply to every person without exception or distinction.
- **Connection to the Cross:** Though verse 25 develops it further, the redemption here clearly points to Jesus’ sacrificial death as the means of our justification.

This section continues seamlessly into verses 25-26, which explain how God can justly forgive sinners: He presented Christ as a propitiation (wrath-satisfying sacrifice) so that God could be both perfectly just and the justifier of those who have faith in Jesus.

## Application Today

Romans 3:21-24 is liberating news for anyone who has ever felt the weight of guilt, failure, or religious performance:

- You do not have to earn God’s approval through good deeds, church attendance, or moral effort.
- Your standing with God depends entirely on what Christ has done, received by simple trust.
- This levels the playing field: no one is “better” or “worse” in God’s sight—all need the same grace, and all can receive it the same way.
- It fuels humility, gratitude, and bold assurance. Christians can say with confidence: “I am justified—not because I am good, but because Christ is.”

This passage has shaped the Protestant Reformation’s emphasis on *sola gratia* (grace alone), *sola fide* (faith alone), and *solus Christus* (Christ alone). It remains the foundation for understanding how anyone—anywhere—can be made right with God.

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## Summary of 1 Peter 1:13-21

**1 Peter 1:13-21** is a pivotal practical section in Peter’s first letter. Written to suffering Christians (mostly Gentiles) scattered as “exiles” in a hostile world, this passage bridges rich praise for salvation (vv. 3-12) with calls to live it out. The “therefore” in verse 13 signals: *In light of your new birth, living hope, and glorious inheritance, here is how you must live now.*

## Overall Meaning

Peter issues three main commands for believers living as temporary residents (“exiles”) in a pagan culture:

1. **Set your hope fully** on future grace at Christ’s return (v. 13).
2. **Be holy** in all your conduct, reflecting God’s character (vv. 14-16).
3. **Live in reverent fear** of God your impartial Father (vv. 17-21).

These are not legalistic rules but flow from the gospel: God has redeemed you at infinite cost, made you His children, and promised future glory. Holiness is the natural result of salvation, not its cause. Your future hope shapes your present conduct, and remembering the price of your redemption motivates obedience and gratitude.

## Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

- **Verse 13: “Preparing your minds for action”** (literally “gird up the loins of your mind”) is a vivid image from ancient times: tuck in your long robe so you can run or work freely. It means: roll up your mental sleeves, discipline your thinking, get serious and focused. **“Be sober-minded”** adds mental clarity and self-control (not just avoiding drunkenness, but avoiding anything that clouds judgment). The positive command: **“set your hope fully”** (completely, without distraction) on the grace coming at “the revelation of Jesus Christ” (His second coming). Future grace fuels endurance now.
- **Verses 14-16: “As obedient children”** — your new identity is as God’s kids, so act like it. Negatively: **“do not be conformed to the passions of your former ignorance”** (the old self-centered desires you followed before knowing Christ). Positively: **“be holy in all your conduct,”** because “he who called you is holy.” Peter quotes Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7 (“Be holy, for I am holy”). Holiness means being set apart for God—distinct from the world’s patterns—in thoughts, words, actions, relationships, and daily life. It touches “all” areas, not just “religious” ones.
- **Verse 17:** If you pray to God as **“Father,”** remember He also **“judges impartially according to each one’s deeds.”** This produces **“reverent fear”** (healthy awe and respect, not terror) during your short **“exile”** (time on earth as strangers). God shows no favoritism; your life matters. Fear here motivates careful, obedient living, balanced with the love of a Father.
- **Verses 18-19: “Knowing that you were ransomed”** (or redeemed) — this is the powerful motivation. You were freed from an **“empty”** or **“futile”** way of life inherited from ancestors (pagan traditions or even empty Jewish legalism). Not with something cheap or temporary like silver or gold, but **“with the precious blood of Christ,”** the perfect Passover Lamb **“without blemish or spot”** (echoing Exodus 12 and Isaiah 53). Christ’s sacrificial death was the infinite ransom price that bought your freedom from sin’s slavery.
- **Verses 20-21:** This redemption was no afterthought. Christ was **“foreknown”** (planned and loved) **“before the foundation of the world”** yet **“made manifest in the last times”** for your sake. God raised and glorified Him so

that your “**faith and hope are in God.**” Everything centers on God’s eternal plan, culminating in Christ, securing your trust in Him.

## Key Themes and Significance

- **Hope → Holiness:** Full hope in Christ’s return and future grace produces holy living in the present. Your eternal future reorients your daily choices.
- **Identity as God’s Children:** Obedience flows from relationship, not mere duty. You are no longer slaves to old passions but beloved sons and daughters.
- **Costly Redemption:** The high price of your salvation (Christ’s blood, not money or effort) makes cheap or compromised living unthinkable. It combats spiritual amnesia—never forget what God paid for you.
- **Reverent Fear in Exile:** Christians live as pilgrims in a hostile world. Fear of God (awe + accountability) keeps you from blending in.
- **Continuity with the Old Testament:** Peter weaves in Leviticus (holiness), the Passover lamb, and prophetic promises, showing the gospel fulfills and surpasses the old covenant.
- **Trinitarian undertones:** The Father plans and judges; the Son redeems with His blood; the Spirit sanctifies (implied in the broader context of 1 Peter 1:2).

This section fits Peter’s overall purpose: encourage persecuted believers that their suffering has purpose and that their new life in Christ demands (and enables) a distinct, hopeful, holy lifestyle.

## Application Today

- **Mental Discipline:** Actively prepare your mind—fill it with Scripture, reject sloppy or worldly thinking, and fix your eyes on Christ’s return.
- **Holiness in Daily Life:** Examine every area (work, entertainment, speech, relationships). Ask: Does this reflect God’s holy character or my old passions?
- **Remember the Price:** When tempted to sin or grow complacent, recall the “precious blood.” Gratitude for the cross is a stronger motivator than guilt or rules.
- **Balanced Fear and Love:** Approach God as loving Father *and* impartial Judge. This produces careful, joyful obedience even in hard times.
- **Hope as Fuel:** In trials, suffering, or cultural pressure, fully hope in the grace ahead. This sustains endurance and purity.

1 Peter 1:13-21 beautifully shows that salvation is not just forgiveness but transformation: God saves us *from* futility *for* holiness, grounding everything in the precious blood of Jesus.

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## Summary of Hebrews 9:11-15

**Hebrews 9:11-15** is a central passage in the book of Hebrews, explaining the **superiority of Christ's high-priestly ministry and sacrifice** over the Old Testament

tabernacle system and its repeated animal offerings. The author (traditionally linked to Paul or a close associate) has been contrasting the temporary, earthly provisions of the first covenant with the permanent, heavenly realities of the new covenant in Christ.

This section directly follows a description of the earthly tabernacle's limitations (Hebrews 9:1-10), showing how Christ's work fulfills and surpasses the Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur) rituals in Leviticus 16.

## Overall Meaning

Christ, as the perfect High Priest, has entered the true heavenly sanctuary (the reality behind the earthly copy) through His own sacrificial death. Unlike the old system—which provided only external, temporary cleansing—Jesus' one-time offering of Himself secures **eternal redemption**, cleanses the inner conscience, and establishes the new covenant. This allows believers to serve God freely with a clear conscience and inherit eternal promises.

The passage uses "how much more" logic: If the lesser (animal blood) achieved limited outward results, the greater (Christ's blood) achieves far superior inward and eternal results.

## Verse-by-Verse Breakdown

- **Verse 11:** "When Christ appeared" marks the arrival of the new era. He serves as High Priest of "the good things that have come" (the blessings of salvation now realized). He passes through the "greater and more perfect tent" — the heavenly sanctuary, not a man-made structure (echoing the earthly tabernacle as a "copy and shadow" in Hebrews 8:5). This is the true presence of God, "not of this creation."
- **Verse 12:** Christ "entered **once for all** into the holy places" (the heavenly equivalent of the Most Holy Place). He did not use animal blood (goats and calves, used on the Day of Atonement) but "by means of his own blood." This act secured "**eternal redemption**" (*lutrōsis* — a permanent ransom or release from bondage). The old sacrifices had to be repeated yearly; Christ's was final and complete. His death on the cross was sufficient—no further offering or presentation in heaven was needed to finish atonement.
- **Verse 13:** The author recalls Old Testament rituals for comparison. The blood of goats and bulls (for atonement) and the ashes of a red heifer (Numbers 19, for ceremonial uncleanness) provided outward, physical purification ("of the flesh"). These made a person ritually clean for worship or community participation but could not touch the heart or remove guilt permanently.
- **Verse 14:** "**How much more**" the blood of Christ! Jesus offered Himself "without blemish" (perfect, sinless—fulfilling the requirement for unblemished sacrifices) "through the eternal Spirit" (emphasizing the divine power and willing obedience involved). His blood **purifies the conscience** from "**dead works**" (sinful actions, futile religious efforts, or anything leading to spiritual death). The result: believers can "**serve the**



**living God**" with inner freedom and joy, not mere external compliance. This is a profound shift—from ritual to relationship, from guilt to grateful service.

- **Verse 15:** Because of this death, Christ is the "**mediator of a new covenant**" (Jeremiah 31:31-34 fulfilled). Those "who are called" (believers) receive the "**promised eternal inheritance.**" Christ's death acts as a ransom that redeems transgressions even from the old covenant era, making forgiveness complete for all time.

## Key Themes and Significance

- **Superior Sanctuary:** Earthly tabernacle/temple vs. heavenly reality. Christ ministers in the true presence of God.
- **Superior Sacrifice:** Animal blood (temporary, external, repeated) vs. Christ's blood (eternal, internal, once-for-all). His self-offering was voluntary, perfect, and powered by the Spirit.
- **Eternal Redemption:** Not annual covering of sins, but permanent release from sin's penalty, power, and guilt.
- **Conscience Cleansed:** The old system could not fully relieve guilt or enable true worship; Christ's work does, freeing us from "dead works" for living service.
- **New Covenant Mediator:** Jesus bridges the gap, securing inheritance and forgiveness that the first covenant could only foreshadow.
- **"Once for All":** A major emphasis in Hebrews—Christ's work is finished and unrepeatable (see also Hebrews 7:27; 10:10).

This passage roots deeply in the Old Testament (Day of Atonement, red heifer, covenant promises) while showing how Jesus is the fulfillment and superior reality.

## Application Today

- **Assurance of Forgiveness:** Your conscience can be truly clean—not through religious efforts or repeated confessions, but through trusting Christ's finished work. No need to earn acceptance.
- **Freedom to Serve:** Guilt-free living empowers joyful obedience and worship of the "living God." Dead works (legalism, performance, or habitual sin) lose their hold.
- **Hope in Trials:** Hebrews was written to encourage Jewish Christians facing pressure to return to old rituals. This reminds us that Christ has secured eternal blessings that cannot be lost.
- **Gratitude for the Cross:** The "how much more" invites awe at the infinite value of Jesus' blood—far surpassing any Old Testament shadow.

**Hebrews 9:11-15** powerfully proclaims the gospel: What the law and sacrifices could never fully do, Christ has accomplished perfectly. It ties closely to earlier themes in your questions (e.g., ransom in Mark 10:45, justification by grace in Romans 3:21-24, costly redemption in 1 Peter 1:18-19).