

The Great Irruption – The Work of Christ

Redemption, Ransom (NT)

I. Introduction

In the Old Testament, redemption was a covenant affair--God redeemed His people Israel from Egypt because of His covenant with the Patriarchs, and all subsequent redemption was based on His 'kinship' or community-membership with His people.

As a kinship function, it involved the basic function of "rescue" but it also cost something--money, time, risk, effort. It "defended" your honor and worth, by investing in your restoration to your proper place. "You" might have been a field, a sacrifice, or a fellow Israelite.

An extreme case of defending and restoring you to honor, was in the Blood-avenger. In cases where one could NOT be rescued, your reputation and memory as 'innocent' and 'unworthy of death' was defended by legal execution of those violating your rights and honor (by murder).

This concept in the OT was a part of both popular individual piety, as well as a future expectation of the Nation Israel. Some day, God would visit His people and make Israel into the 'head of nations, and not the tail' (Dt 28.13,44).

But the adverse situations that we get ourselves into--via oppression, the consequence engine, voluntary slavery, and alienation--take on a fuller, more sinister, and less encouraging image as we move into the New Testament era...It looks like God will have to do a 'miracle' to help us in our newly seen plight...

II. Jewish thought from the Exile to the Baptist

A. The expansion of angelology and demonology (e.g. 2 Chronicles, Daniel, the Dead Sea Scrolls, The Pseudepigrapha)

B. The realization of the problem of the 'evil inclination'

- *The OT prophets:*

"Where sin is shifted so clearly and completely into the interior life of Man, and where its most diverse expressions are recognized as the fruits of a single tree, it also becomes impossible to conceal any longer *the compulsive character of the apostasy*. Despite all warnings, despite all the lessons of history, despite the daily experience of the destructive effect which rejection of God has on life both inwardly and outwardly, the prophets see their people continuing on the way to perdition. Before them rises *the enigma of an ineradicable tendency to sin*, which takes possession of men with compelling power and drives them along its own road. The Yahwist had already recognized this inner proclivity toward evil as a deep-rooted condition of Man;(Gen. 6-3; 8-21) now the prophets point to it again and again. To Hosea this perverted direction of the will in his people seemed an alien vital principle; a *ruah zenunim*, a spirit of harlotry, must have taken possession of them (Hos. 4.12; 5.4). Hence, despite all the unwearying faithfulness with which his God pursues them, he regards their conversion as impossible, unless by that same God a miracle is wrought. Isaiah sees his countrymen tearing each other to pieces in fratricidal strife, and they seem to him men crazed

in mind (Isa. 9. 18; cf. also 5. 18). But Jeremiah is the one who ponders most over the riddle of the hypnotic force with which men are attracted by evil, even though, as a result, they find themselves in the deepest distress, and indeed cannot go on living without the narcotic of sinful pleasure (Jer. 2.25). He compares the enslaving power which leaves his people no more free will to the irresistible force of the mating drive in animals in season, their zeal in safeguarding and cosseting injustice to the water stored cool in the cisterns, the evil habitus which has become second nature to them, and which is impervious to all exhortation, to the colour of the Ethiopian or the markings of the leopards (Jer. 2.23f ; 6.7; 13.23, cf. 6.16f). The heart of Man appears to him an impenetrable abyss, full of gruesome riddles, the sight of which kills all hope (Jer. 17.9). For it never occurs to him to off-load this sinister compulsion on to a non-human power; Man deliberately hardens himself against the impulses of the good, and his enmity toward God must, as *serirut leb*, hardness of heart, call down judgment upon him (Jer. 3.17; 4.4; 9.25). Ezekiel likewise portrays the madness of stiff-necked persistence in sin, (Ezek. 16.48, 51ff-; 23.11) as a result of which Israel has sunk even lower than Sodom, and has become a *bet meri*, a rebellious house, which opposes a heart of stone to every appeal and exhortation of her God (Ezek 36.26).

"This ruthless diagnosis of the sinful constitution of Man, however, makes his situation hopeless. Of all the evils which oppress him sin is now recognized as the most serious, and the breaking of its spell becomes *the most important question in life*. Such an assessment of the situation, moreover, disposes of the attempt of the Law to create a world of righteousness and holiness. Indeed, the whole history of the nation showed how little the Law could prevent rebellion against God's will, but instead inevitably exposed the real depth of hostility to God. *The only course now left open was to turn one's eyes to the eschatological new creation of God's people*, which would be able to heal the irremediable rift between Man and God. [Eichrodt, *Theology of the OT*, II.389f]

- *The Rabbis:*

"His [*Evil Yezer*] main activity consists in seducing and tempting. His ways are of the insinuating kind, appearing first to the man as a modest traveller, then as a welcome guest, and ending in exacting obedience as the master of the house. He shows himself also more as an effeminate being with no capacity for doing harm, but afterwards overwhelms with masculine strength. The snares in which the *Evil Yezer* entangles man are at first sight as insignificant and vain as the thin thread of the cobweb, but take soon the dimensions of the rope, making it impossible for man to free himself from it. In another place this treachery of the *Evil Yezer* is compared with that of the dogs in the city of Rome: they lie down before a baker's shop and simulate sleep; but when the baker in his security allows himself to take a nap, they quickly jump up, snatch away a loaf, and carry it away. The *Evil Yezer* deals with man in the same way, feigning weakness and helplessness, but as soon as man is off his guard, he jumps on him and makes him sin...The man who is most exposed to the allurements of the *Evil Yezer* is the vain one. " *Yezer*," the Rabbis say, " does not walk in retired places. He resorts to the middle of the highroads. When he sees a man dyeing his eyebrows, dressing his hair, lifting his heels, he says, "That is my man!" ...It is interesting to notice in passing that this instantaneous resistance to the *Evil Yezer* is also recommended in another place. 'He that spoils his *Yezer* by tender and considerate treatment (that is, allows him slowly to gain dominion over himself without rebuking him) will end in becoming his slave.'" (*Aspects of Rabbinic Theology*, Solomon Schechter (1909), pp.248-249)

C. The merging of these into notions of spiritual 'movements' and forces

1. The literary genre of Apocalyptic :

- Angels and armies, cosmic conflict, human and angelic
- A vision given from a supernatural figure to a human, about the future merging of the transcendent and the temporal.

2. The nature of the conflict:

- *Rabbinic:*

"The preceding chapter has introduced us to the idea that much of the Messianic drama filling the eons of waiting takes place in heaven rather than on earth. Even when the Messiah finally comes, the major context between his forces and the opposing forces of evil is played out in heaven above. Or, to put it differently, the Messianic wars between Israel and the nations will have their prototype, or heavenly reflection, in contexts between God and Samael, in struggles between celestial manifestations of radiant light and the fires of evil, or, more concretely, between the gigantic star of the Messiah and other, lesser and evil, stars which repeatedly attack it. The celestial victory of the forces of good over those of evil will signal the triumph of the Messiah over his opponents." (*The Messiah Texts*, Raphael Patai, p.90)

"Under the charismatic leadership of the second Messiah, Messiah ben David, the great wars will continue. God fights the battles of His messiah and the ultimate victory comes to pass. The final confrontation takes place on two planes: in heaven, where God chastises and subdues the celestial princes of the nations of the world, thereby weakening the earthly armies under their protection; and down on earth where God intimidates and devastates those armies with fearsome portents. Thus the small nation of Israel, led by Messiah ben David, can overcome its enemies despite their vast superiority in numbers." (*The Messiah Texts*, Raphael Patai, p.171)

- *Qumran:*

1. "At the end of history, for which the covenanters were preparing by obeying God's revealed and hidden demands, the almighty Lord will intervene. He will then send the great leaders of the future--a prophet and the Davidic and priestly messiahs--who, along with the hosts of the sons of light, will take part in the ultimate divine victory over evil...This resurrection happens apparently after the final war has been decided and cataclysmic destruction has occurred. At that time a new kind of communion with God and the angels will begin. That communion will be a continuation of the one that the members enjoyed in the present time, since they believed that in some way they joined with the heavenly hosts in their worship of God. The Temple Scroll speaks of a new temple that God will create, while a series of other texts describe the layout of a new Jerusalem." (*The Dead Sea Scrolls Today*, James C. VanderKam, pp.117f).

2. "In God's predestined plan there are two ways: the way of light and the way of darkness, the way of good and the way of evil. There is no mediating option. The entire universe is involved in this duality, which is ultimately under God's firm control. Angels, which are numerous, and humans belong in one or the other of the two camps. The two camps are engaged in constant warfare with one another, a conflict that will end only when God comes in final judgment and gives victory to the sons of light and their angelic allies...The cosmic war between these two primal forces also played itself out in the lives of individuals. Each person had some amount of light and of darkness. Or, to put it another way, everyone is sinful, even if he is one of the sons of light:

The Angel of Darkness leads all the children of righteousness astray, and until his end, all their sin, iniquities, wickedness, and all their unlawful deeds are caused by his dominion in accordance with the mysteries of God. Every one of their chastisements, and every one of the seasons of their distress, shall be brought about by the rule of his persecution; for all his allotted spirits seek the overthrow of the sons of light. (*Manual of Discipline* 3.21-24; p. 65)

"The Manual goes on to enumerate the kinds of actions that result from the two spirits and to offer a programmatic declaration:

The nature of all the children of men is ruled by these (two spirits), and during their life all the hosts of men have a portion of their divisions and walk in (both) their ways. And the whole reward for their deeds shall be, for everlasting ages, according to whether each man's portion in their two divisions is great or small. For God has established the spirits in equal measure until the final age, and has set everlasting hatred between their divisions. Truth abhors the works of falsehood, and falsehood hates all the ways of truth. And their struggle is fierce in all their arguments for they do not walk together. (4.15-18; p. 66) [VanderKam, p.110]

D. The escalation of the problem!

Category	OT	NT
<i>Oppression</i>	Human malice/greed	Superhuman malice
<i>Consequence Engine</i>	Individual acts of sin	A lifetime of self-deforming moral failure, in an context of inexorable law
<i>Voluntary Slavery</i>	Non-kin human master	Anti-God and Anti-life forces and influences
<i>Alienation</i>	Away from home	Separated from God, the "home" of life and warmth

IV. Overview of the main words:

A. *Lytron*

This word comes originally from *Lyo* (to loose or release) which could be applied to clothes as well as prisoners. In time, the *-tron* suffix was added to it, indicating "means of loosing". *Lytron* thus became means of release, or 'ransom price' for prisoners and slaves.

In time, an entire specialized word group formed about *lytron* itself, focused on ransom of slaves/prisoners, and occasionally on release of debt securities (e.g., fields as pawned).

Its main focus is on the idea of "freedom" or "release" (via payment).

This word, and its related terms, forms the bulk of the Greek NT words translated 'ransom' or 'redemption'.

B. *Agorazo* and *Exagorazo*

This is your basic commercial word--to "buy", and its focus is on transfer of ownership. "I bought it, I own it."

It is used in many places in the NT for regular commercial transactions (e.g., buying food), and in a couple of places dealing with the subject of redemption.

C. *Peripoioumai*

This occurs only once (in Acts 20.28), and its usage there conforms to its extrabiblical focus on the owner's emotional attachment to his possession (i.e., a treasured possession).

V. *Lytron*

A. The social background of this word.

1. Graeco-Roman slavery

a. How extensive was it?

"but a sense of the scale of what was involved derives from the estimates that for the generation from about 65 BC to about 30 BC 100,000 new slaves were needed each year in Italy and that from about 50 BC to AD 150 more than 500,000 new slaves were needed every year for the empire as a whole. In contrast, in the three and a half centuries of New World slavery, the annual average of people transported to the Americas [as slaves] has been calculated at about 28,000, with an annual peak average of 60,000 when the slave trade was at its height." [SASAR:31f]

"At the end of the first century BC the servile population of the Roman heartland lay, according the modern estimates, in the order of two to three millions, **representing 33-40 per cent of the total population.**" (SASAR:29f)

b. Where did they get this many slaves?

1. Roman military conquests (mostly before the time of Christ):

"Much is heard in the sources of enslaving a vanquished enemy *en masse*, a habit the Romans probably acquired as their military and political influence spiraled throughout the Italian peninsula in the fourth and early third centuries BC."

- Rival Etruscan city of Veii (10,000 slaves--entire city)
- Siege of Aspis in Carthage's territory in 256 BC (20,000)
- Third war against Carthage in 146 BC (55,000)
- Campaign against the Alpine tribe of Salassi in 25 BC (44,000)
- The city of Ctesiphon in Parthian war of 198 AD (100,000)

"It does not follow, however, that all war captives were automatically conveyed from the site of capture for disposal in the marketplaces of the Roman heartland. At times Roman commanders allowed prisoners to be ransomed, so freedom might be recovered fairly quickly if relatives or friends were available to pay the necessary price. Likewise captives were often sold off on the spot to itinerant dealers or distributed to the troops as a form of payment or bonus." [SASAR:33]

In the Jewish war of AD66-70, Josephus tells us of:

- 2,130 women and children enslaved at Japha
- 30,400 at Tiberias in Galilee
- 97,000 at Jerusalem
- 700 sent to Rome for the victory march

Cato "especially bought prisoners of war when they were still little so that they could be raised and trained like young dogs or athletes" (Plutarch, *Cat.* 21.1)

"Often in antiquity wars were waged to acquire laborers, and the armies were followed by slave merchants. The axiom occurs constantly: "The one who is taken in war belongs to the conqueror" (Aristotle); the law of war transformed prisoners into slaves (Heliodorus, Philo). The prisoner, who was like captured booty (Plato) took on an exchange value and would not be freed except for ransom." [TLNT:Spicq, 427]

cf. 2 Peter 2.19: "*for by what a man is overcome, by this he is enslaved*"

cf. Rom 7.23: "*but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members.*"

2. Natural reproduction:

Vernae were born into slavery, and were often preferred for important tasks. They were more "expensive" (e.g., infancy and childhood costs), but were not 'troublemakers' often.

"But having children could bring slaves certain benefits in real terms. Columella believed that female slaves should be rewarded for bearing children and said that he himself had given a mother of three time off from work and a mother of more than three children her freedom as well." [SASAR:34]

3. Rescue from Exposure (intended infanticide):

"Another professor of literature included in Suetonius' collection who was also once a slave was C. Melissus, a teacher and author who flourished in the Augustan era and who once actually received a commission from Augustus himself. But Melissus was not a *verna*. He was born of free parents but was exposed as an infant and then brought up in slavery by the man who reclaimed him after his parents had abandoned him. At all levels of society, whether due to poverty or fears of overburdening a patrimony with too many heirs, infant exposures was a widespread fact of life in the Roman world. But because those who chose to rescue abandoned children were free to raise them as slaves if they wished, infant exposure was also another important means of replenishing the slave supply. The Christian polemicist Tertullian (*Apol.* 9.7) condemned pagans for abandoning their children to certain death from cold, starvation or being eaten by dogs." [SASAR:35]

4. International trade:

"It appears therefore that Roman merchants were constantly traversing the spiderweb of trading routes that crossed the Mediterranean in search of slaves from locally powerful, distant rulers who were willing to exchange captives, or even the weaker members of their own communities, from the material goods the merchants carried." [SASAR:37]

5. Piracy:

"Piracy within the sphere of Roman influence, finally, must be acknowledged as a major means of generating new slaves. At the beginning of Rome's central period the pirates of Cilicia were already notorious for the scale on which they conducted kidnapping and trafficking activities: the island of Delos, where they dumped their victims because they knew Roman merchants were waiting there to receive them, is said to have turned over tens of thousands of slaves daily in the early second century Bc. What the pirates' activities involved, however, is graphically illustrated by a piece of evidence from late antiquity, one of the newly discovered letters of Augustine, which shows among other things that at the turn of the fifth century AD piracy was still a scourge in the Mediterranean. Augustine spoke in his letter (*Epistulae* 10*) of the formidable presence along the coasts of North Africa, and especially at Hippo Regius, of itinerant slavedealers (*mangones*), Galatians in particular, who were buying up as slaves freeborn people captured by independent marauders who made it their business to undertake forays from the coast into remote rural villages in order to hunt down and kidnap as many victims as possible. In one village, the rumour went, they had carried off all the women and children of the community after murdering all the men. Some local people, Augustine continued, were conniving with the invaders: there was a woman who had a clandestine business specialising in young girls from the interior; there was a man (a Christian at that) who had sold his wife into slavery because he preferred to have the cash; and there were indigent parents selling their children because they needed the cash. Augustine said that it was the practice of the Christian community to use its funds to redeem as many of the kidnapped victims as possible, and in one recent episode 120 'slaves' whom the Galatians were boarding, or were preparing to board, onto their ships had been saved. But the trade itself was so lucrative that there were advocates on hand who wanted to try to recover the reclaimed victims for the slavedealers, so their safety was in real jeopardy. It was a desperate situation, and one that must have been far from uncommon throughout the whole of the central period." [SASAR:37f]

6. Some people actually sold themselves into slavery, for differing reasons:

"Some ambitious men did the same [sold themselves] in the hope of becoming the stewards of noblemen or imperial treasures. This, in my view, was the story of the all-powerful and extremely wealthy Pallas, scion of a noble Arcadian family, who sold himself into slavery so that he might be taken on as steward by a woman of the imperial family and who wound up as minister of finance and *eminence grise* to the emperor Claudius." (*A History of Private Life*:I, p.55)

"We know many among ourselves who have given themselves up to slavery, in order that they could ransom others. Many others have surrendered themselves to slavery, so that with the price that they received for themselves, they might provide food for others." Clement of Rome, c.96, 1.70

c. How did it compare to other systems of slavery?

<i>Issue</i>	OT	Roman	New World
<i>Motive</i>	Humanitarian/ Economic	Social Status	Economic Advantage
<i>Entry</i>	Voluntary	Mixed, mostly involuntary	All involuntary
<i>Treatment</i>	Good	Wide variance, depending on owner	Narrow variance, depending on owner
<i>Living conditions</i>	Same as master	Rural, mixed; domestic, good	Mostly very bad
<i>Legal controls on masters</i>	High	Medium	None
<i>Legal recourse of slaves</i>	Full	Medium/high	None
<i>Legal agent status</i>	Full	Medium (e.g., slaves could own slaves)	Virtually none
<i>Legal Exit</i>	Automatic or early	Customary/Frequent	Virtually never
<i>Occupation types</i>	Narrow	Very wide range	Medium range
<i>Social status</i>	Acceptable	Very wide range	Mostly very low
<i>Economic plight relative to poor free labor</i>	Better	Better to much better	Same or worse
<i>Social advancement opportunities</i>	Good	Excellent	Poor

d. If some people sold themselves into slavery for social gains, what was *bad* about it?

1. No control over one's fate--the stories of caprice are horrifying
2. The whole empire was against you--many institutions designed to keep you in your place
3. Low-level abuse was common.
4. De-humanizing for many: you were property and your status was "dead"
5. You participated in only a small part of your life's contribution
6. Pressure to conform, even in matters of questionable ethics, was substantial. Standing up for one's belief could sometimes result in death.
7. Your material needs were often met at a subsistence-plus level only.
8. You had very little power to improve your lot within reasonable timeframes.
9. If you were strong but dumb, you might become a gladiator or a prostitute. If you were just dumb and without self-discipline, you went to the farm and were under confinement.
10. *If your master was cruel and powerful, your situation could be horrific.*

Excursus, the 'Masters' described in the NT:

- Sin (the pull/impulse toward evil and selfishness):

We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. (Rom 7.14)

that He might redeem us from every lawless deed (Titus 2.14)

- The Law (the consequences of law-breaking):

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law (Gal 3.13)

in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons (Gal 4.5)

- Death (the law of down-hill/destructive consequences):

that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God (Rom 8.21)

- False gods (false, misleading, and consumptive religious practices):

Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods. 9 But now that you know God—or rather are known by God—how is it that you are turning back to those weak and miserable principles? Do you wish to be enslaved by them all over again? (Gal 4.8f)

- Satan's kingdom (e.g., macro-cultural forces that restrict our freedom, creativity, and transformation):

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness (Col 1.13)

so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death (Heb 2.14f)

- Appetites (impulsiveness, lack of self-control):

For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. (Rom 16.18)

- Desires and pleasures (addictions):

At one time we too were foolish, disobedient, deceived and enslaved by all kinds of passions and pleasures (Tit 3.3)

.....

2. . How did one get out of this slavery?

a. If you were a captive of another country, your home country could buy you back (redeem you), and restore you to your original free status at home.

- "In the fourth century BC, a decree at Athens honors Eurylochos of Kydonia who 'ransomed many Athenians and sent them back from Crete to their country'" [TLNT:424]
- Darius asked Alexander the Great to accept ten thousand talents as ransom for captives" [Plutarch]
- Whole cities could be ransomed.

b. Your owner/master set you free:

- In their will, after their death [testamentary manumission]
- Before their death, before the magistrate (conferred Roman citizenship, too!)
- Before their death, informally, by letter or in meeting with friend-witnesses (no citizenship this way)

c. Your friends/family bought you from your current owner (perhaps using your own funds), and then set you free either formally or informally

d. You bought your own freedom, at a temple ("sacral manumission")

"Sacral manumission is best known from the 1000 or so inscriptions which date from 201 BC till approximately AD 100 and which record the sale of slaves to Pythian Apollo at Delphi. As a slave had no legal right, the sanctuary's deity acted as a party to the contract for sale. The deity bought the slave from his/her former owner with money supposedly deposited into the sanctuary's treasure by the slave or someone acting on his/her behalf. The slave became the property of Apollo and thus *hieros*. However, the sale was fictitious, for the god made no use of his property rights and the slave became in effect free." [NDIEC6:73]

B. The religious background of the word:

1. Graeco-Roman: only the sacral manumission context
2. Jewish background: this word is used to translate BOTH OT words in the LXX

C. The pivotal verse in the NT: Mark 10.45...

"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

- This puts the payment/cost aspect in the foreground of the redemption concept!
- The echoes of the Suffering Servant of Isaiah, throughout Mark:

Mark 3.27: *"But no one can enter the **strong man's house and plunder his property** unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house."* With Is 49.25f: *"Can the **prey be taken from the mighty man**, Or the captives of a tyrant be rescued?"* 25 Surely, thus says the LORD, *"Even the captives of the mighty man will be taken away, And the prey of the tyrant will be rescued;"*

Mark 9.12: *"And yet how is it written of the Son of Man that He should **suffer many things and be treated with contempt?**"* with Is 53.3-4,19: *"He was **despised and rejected** by men, a man of sorrows, and **familiar with suffering**. Like one from whom men hide their faces **he was despised, and we esteemed him not**. 4 Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and **afflicted**...10 Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and **cause him to suffer**,*

Mark 10.33: *"We are going up to Jerusalem," he said, "and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will **condemn him to death**"* with Is 53.8: *"By oppression and **judgment he was taken away**. "*

Mark 10.33b: *"and will **hand him over** to the Gentiles, 34 who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise."* With Is 53.6,12 [LXX]: *"All we as sheep have gone astray; every one has gone astray in his way; and the Lord **gave him up** for our sins." And "therefore he shall inherit many, and he shall divide the spoils of the mighty because his soul **was delivered to death**"*

Mark 10.33c: *"who will **mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him**. Three days later he will rise."* With Is 50.6: *"I offered my back to those who beat me, my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard; I did not hide my face from **mocking and spitting**."*

Mark 10.45b: "For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many" with Is 53.10: "Yet it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer, and though the LORD makes his life a guilt offering, "

Goel is used in Isaiah 35.9; 41.14; 43.1,14; 44:22-24; 52.3; 62.12; 63.9; and *PDH* in 51.11. Isaiah 52 is the 'call to depart', Isaiah 54 is the goal of the New Exodus--but the path lies through the Suffering Servant of Isaiah 53! Mark 10.45 is a good summary of the means of the New Exodus.

- "Part of what is at issue in these chapters [in Isaiah] is a debate between Yahweh and his 'blind' servant Israel over Yahweh's right to effect her salvation as he chooses, which in this case centers on Yahweh's staggering and offensive choice of Cyrus as his agent. It is Israel's refusal to accept this choice--perhaps due to expectations of a new Moses or new David--that results in the delay of the majority of the Isaianic new Exodus promises. Thus in chapters 49-55, given Israel's idolatrous refusal to accept Yahweh's plan, a new but unnamed 'servant' Israel is commissioned (49:1ff), whose utterly misunderstood careers (Isa. 53:1ff; cf. 52:12) and 'death' is apparently closely tied to the realization of the now postponed full restoration of the nation." [Rikki E. Watts, in HI:JSS53:130]

D. *Lytron* and *antilytron* (I Tim 2.3ff)

who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.

Lytron ("ransom") + *anti* ("in place of") => *antilytron* for Paul ("ransom for all")

Cf. Josephus *Ant.* 14.106f: " It was the priest who was guardian of the sacred treasures, and whose name was Eleazar... when he saw that Crassus was busy in gathering money, and was in fear for the entire ornaments of the temple, he gave him this beam of gold as a ransom for the whole, (108) but this not till he had given his oath that he would remove nothing else out of the temple, but be satisfied with this only"

E. The New Testament Passages

Three groups: (1) "Old Testament"-style corporate redemption; (2) *lutron* as almost synonymous with present forgiveness--often with OT passover sacrifice overtones; and (3) *apolutron* with a frequent glance at future deliverance from our natural bodies (i.e., our resurrection body).

1. First, the "Old Testament" style passages:

- "His father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied: 68 "Praise be to the Lord, the God of Israel, because he has come and has **redeemed his people**. 69 He has raised up a horn of salvation for us in the house of his servant David 70 (as he said through his holy prophets of long ago), 71 **salvation from our enemies and from the hand of all who hate us**— Luke 1.68
- "There was also a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, 37 and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. 38 Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were **looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem**. Luke 2.38
- "The chief priests and our rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and they crucified him; 21 **but we had hoped that he was the one who was going to redeem Israel**... 25 He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! 26 Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" Luke 24:21

2. Lutron passages

Verb	Item		"therefore"	From	Price	Agent	For	subject	Other-1	
lutron	4	Mr 10.45	"For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."			His life	Son of Man	for many	ransom, purpose	
lutron	5	Mt 20.28	just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.			His life	Son of Man	for many	ransom, purpose	
antilytron	6	1 Tim 2.3-6	who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. 5 For there is one God, and one mediator also between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself as a ransom for all, the testimony borne at the proper time.				Christ	all	Voluntary, ransom	
lutron	7	Titus 2.13f	our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus; 14 who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds.		from every lawless deed	Himself	Christ	purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds	us	
lutron	8	1 Pet 1.18-19	knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.		your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers	precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.			you	Exodus
lutron	9	Heb 9.12	and not through the blood of goats and calves, but through His own blood, He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption.			sacrifice?	Christ			eternal, once4all

3. Apolytro Passages

Verb	Item		"therefore"	From	Price	Agent	For	subject	Other-1
apolytro	10	Luke 21.28	When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near."					persecuted People of God	End-time
apolytro	11	Rom 8.23	We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. 23 Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies.				Full liberation	we, believers	End-time
apolytro	12	Eph 4.30	And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption.					you, believers	End-time
apolytro	13	Eph 1.14	Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, 14 who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.				Full liberation	we, believers	End-time
apolytro	14	1 Cor 1.30	It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. 31 Therefore, as it is written: "Let him who boasts boast in the Lord."			Christ	Christ	us, believers	redemption THRU versus redemption IN
apolytro	15	Col 1.14	in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.					we	"in whom" / Exodus
apolytro	16	Eph 1.7a	In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses			His blood		we	"in whom"
apolytro	17	Rom 3.24	being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus;					all who have sinned	justification was THRU redemption! (and "in Christ Jesus")
apolytro	18	Heb 9.15	And for this reason He is the mediator of a new covenant, in order that since a death has taken place for the redemption of the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant,			death		the transgressions that were committed under the first covenant	

F. Differences in emphasis between these two

<i>Lutron</i>	<i>Apolytro</i>
Emphasis on Price and Agent	Emphasis on "from"
Focus on present state	Focus on future state
Effects are for all	Effects are for believers
Core image is of "rescue by ransom"	Core image is of "liberation"

G. After freedom, then what?

John 8.36: "If therefore the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed"

Gal 5.1: "It was for freedom that Christ set us free"

- "A freedperson owed some continuing duties to his or her former master but was legally free. The former master remained a patron, who would help the freedperson out financially and politically; the freedperson remained a client, who would also look out for the former master's interests and reputation. Freedpersons were still considered part of their former master's household. (New Testament BBC)
- "The relation of the ex-slave to his ex-master, parts of whose name he now as a rule added to his former slave name, what that of client to patron. The patron was expected to look out for his freedman's welfare. The freedman in return was legally obligated to render to his patron *obsequium et officium*, "obedience and services" of various kinds, including support if the patron should fall into need...and though patrons were legally entitled to share in the estates of their freedmen..., they frequently did not exercise this right but, on the contrary, left legacies from their own estates to their freedmen." [*Roman Civilization--Sourcebook II: the Empire*, p. 256f]
- "Some freed slaves remained in the household of their former master, in his service; others were set up on their own elsewhere and became completely independent. In either case the freed slave maintained a symbolic tie with the household of his master, who now became his 'patron.' He was obliged to pay homage (*obsequium*) to his master, who set great store by this custom. This homage was due the master in gratitude for his good deed in freeing the slave. If a freed slave neglected this duty (which was difficult to enforce), he was stigmatized by all of society as an 'ingrate'." [*A History of Private Life*, vol I: p.87f]
- *Operare*--a certain number of days of work each year
- The morning greeting ritual of patrons and clients!
- And the next generation were freeborn, and could rise to Senatorial status..

VI. Agorazo

A. The social background of this word -- the public marketplace

1. It comes from the word "agora", and originally meant to frequent the marketplace:

"Originally any place of public assembly, the *agora* became identified in classical times with the market- place, a centre of community life which was regularly used for political meetings, judicial hearings, and especially for trade. The derived adj. *agoraios* (lit. belonging to the *agora*) is occasionally found in a good sense to describe those who do their business in the market-place (especially advocates in law-suits), but it is applied much more frequently to loafers who hang around the *agora* looking for excitement or trouble. *Agorozo* the vb. (lit., frequent the *agora*), came to mean "buy in the market-place" , and thence "buy" in general. In Hellenistic times it was also in common use as a term for buying slaves [NIDNTT]

2. The Agora was not just the market--it was also the center of public life:

"The *agora* features several times in the Gospel narrative, and twice more in Acts. It serves as a place for children to play (Matt. 11:16 par.), an employment exchange (Matt. 20:3), a centre of public life where the Pharisees love to be conspicuous (Mk. 12:38 par.), and one focal point of Jesus' healing ministry (Mk. 6:56). Paul found himself on trial in the Philippi *agora* (Acts 16:19), and seized evangelistic opportunities among the crowds in the *agora* at Athens (Acts 17:17). In Acts 17:5 there is a reference to the *agoraioi*, the market-place rabble-rousers; and the adjective *agoraios* reappears in Acts 19:38 in its semi-technical sense of "court-sessions". [NIDNTT]

3. It is mostly a commercial word, denoting change of ownership:

"The verb *agorazo* is found twenty-five times in the NT with its usual commercial meaning, mostly in the Gospels (e.g. Matt. 13:44; Lk. 22:36), but on five other occasions it describes the 'buying' of Christians. This clearly reflects the contemporary terminology of the slave-market [NIDNTT]

4. By the time we get to the NT, the word does NOT require the notion of location ("in a market"), but could be applied of private locations or travelling trading fairs (but still required public dox).

5. For a slave, it simply meant a change of master. It was still a slave *per se*, but the situation might have been vastly different. Compare, for example, how an abused slave could escape to a temple (or statue of an emperor) and request a change of ownership.

6. Abusive owners rarely sold their slaves: their negative testimony could be detrimental to their social status, and they would often have lower resale value due to abuse.

7. As a commercial term it ALWAYS has an emphasis on price, and the intensive form of this (*exagorazo*) is used of servant-redemption.

"The mention of payment is significant; for, in the Hellenistic era, the contract of sale is not completed by the mere exchange of agreements; the seller must have received the *time*, at least the partial down payment that guarantees good faith and excludes the possibility of retraction. Only the payment of the price accomplished the purchase of the property; so much so that the seller maintains his right to the item until he has received payment for it." [TLNT, Spicq]

B. The New Testament Passages

Agorazo Passages

Verb	Item		"therefore"	From	Price	Agent	For	subject	Other-1		
agorazo	20	1 Cor 6.19f	For you have been bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body.	glorify God in your body				(God)	you		
agorazo	21	1 Cor 7.23	You were bought with a price; do not become slaves of men.	do not become slaves of men					you		
agorazo	22	2 Pet 2.1	But false prophets also arose among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves.					Master (Jesus)	false teachers		
agorazo	23	Rev 5.9	And they *sang a new song, saying, "Worthy art Thou to take the book, and to break its seals; for Thou wast slain, and didst purchase for God with Thy blood men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation. 10 "And Thou hast made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God; and they will reign upon the earth."			blood		Jesus	God's ownership ("for God")	men from every tribe and tongue and people and nation	Exodus
agorazo	24	Rev 14.4	These have been purchased from among men as first fruits to God and to the Lamb.		from among men				for firstfruits to God and the Lamb	the Witnesses	Exodus
exagorazo	30	Gal 4.4	But when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, 5 in order that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons					He (God or Jesus)	might receive the adoption as sons	those under the Law	
exagorazo	31	Gal 3.13ff	Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" — 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith		the curse of the Law	by becoming a curse		Christ	that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith	us	

C. Observations on *agorazo* and *exagorazo*

1. Malachi 1.6: "*A son honors his father, and a servant his master. If I am a father, where is the honor due me? If I am a master, where is the respect due me?*" says the LORD Almighty. "
2. Emphasis is on commitment to God *alone* in this present age (with "final installation" in honor to come)
3. The upward mobility motif, in both adoption and in 'kingdom of priests' images
4. The sharing of the inheritance of the master/patron!
5. The price is awesome--'blood' and 'curse'--and substitution is clear.
6. The period of slavery is one of growth/development/proving grounds:

"Certainly, capable slaves had an advantage over their free counterparts in that they were often given an excellent education at their owners' expense. Famous philosophers (Epictetus), teachers (Verrius Flaccus), grammarians (Palaemon), administrators (M.A. Felix, the procurator who was Paul's judge in Acts 23:24-23:27), artists, physicians, and writers were the result of this practice. These slaves and former slaves formed the broads 'class' of intellectuals in the 1st century. Such slaves did not have to wait until manumission before they were capable of establishing friendship with their owners and other free persons as human beings." [ISBE, s.v. "Slavery, NT"]
7. The change in owner makes all the difference in the world!

VII. Other words and passages

A. *peripoieomai*

Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood. (Acts 20.28)

1. The Greek translation of the OT uses this word to refer to the 'treasured' aspect of Israel as God's inheritance:

"*Periousios* is used of God's chosen people at Exod. 19:5; Deut. 7:6; 14:2; 26:18; and Exod. 23:22 (a free translation). *Periousiasmos*, private possession, is used in the LXX translation in Ps. 135:4 (134:4). The idea behind *periousios* is not just that of Israel as God's property but that of his 'rich possession'" [NIDNTT]

2. And this 'treasured' character of God's purchased "goods" shows up in the usage of this verb-family in the NT:

"The idea of salvation stands in the background. The vb. occurs at Lk. 17:33 ('Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it'); Acts 20:28 ('Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you guardians, to feed the church of the Lord which he obtained with his own blood'); 1 Tim. 3:13 ('for those who serve well as deacons gain [*peripoiontai*] good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith which is in Christ Jesus'). The noun occurs in the following passages. In Eph. 1:14 the Spirit is said to be \hat{o} the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it. In 1 Thess. 5:9 Paul assures his readers: 'For God has not destined us for wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ.' In 2 Thess. 2:14 this is described in terms of glory: 'To this he called you through our gospel, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.' Heb. 10:39 may reflect something of the thought of Lk. 17:33: 'But we are not of those who shrink back and are destroyed, but of those who have faith and keep their souls' Finally, 1 Pet. 2:9 takes up the thought of Exod. 19:5, cf. Deut. 14:2: 'But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, that you may declare the wonderful deeds of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light'" [NIDNTT]

" *Periousios* is found only in Tit. 2:14 in a verse which summarizes the work of Christ 'who gave himself for us to redeem us from all iniquity and to purify for himself a people of his own [*laon periousion*] who are zealous for good deeds.' The idea of God's treasured people again takes up the Heb. idea of the *am segullah* (cf. Exod. 19:5; Deut. 14:2), but, as in 1 Pet. 2:9, it is not Israel which is so described but the church. Whereas 1 Pet. focuses on the priestly role of the people in declaring God's wonderful deeds, Tit. 2:14 draws attention to the kind of deeds which the people of God should be zealous to perform" [NIDNTT]

3. The focus of this word, is on how dear we are to God, both in price (blood) and in His heart toward us (unique affection and delight).

B. Related Passages

"and from Jesus Christ, the faithful witness, the first-born of the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him who loves us, and released (lit. 'loosed') us from our sins by His blood (Revelation 1.5)

"The mention of the person and offices of Christ leads John to a burst of praise to his Savior: 'To him who loves us ... be glory and power.' In the present, Christ is loving us. Through all the immediate distresses, persecutions, and even banishment, John is convinced that believers are experiencing Christ's continual care. Moreover, in the past Christ's love was unmistakably revealed in his atoning death, by which he purchased our release from the captivity of sin. Christ's kingly power is chiefly revealed in his ability to transform individual lives through his "blood" [EBCNT]

The word is the base word from which *lutron* was created. It has a core meaning of 'untie' or 'unloose' (bonds, fetters, claims).

It was for freedom that Christ set us free; therefore keep standing firm and do not be subject again to a yoke of slavery (Gal 5.1) [note: neither self-imposed slavery nor enslavement by others]

"Before plunging into this third section of his letter, Paul interjects a verse that is at once a summary of all that has gone before and a transition to what follows. It is, in fact, the key verse of the entire Epistle. Because of the nature of the true gospel and of the work of Christ on his behalf, the believer is now to turn away from anything that smacks of legalism and instead rest in Christ's triumphant work for him and live in the power of Christ's Spirit. The best MS evidence divides the verse into two parts--a declaration of Christ's purpose in saving us ("It is for freedom that Christ has set us free") and an appeal based upon that purpose ("Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery")--rather than leaving it as one sentence as does the KJV. Thus, though only loosely connected with the preceding, the first part aptly sums up the message of chapters 3 and 4, while the second part leads into the ethical section. The appeal is for an obstinate perseverance in freedom as the only proper response to an attempt to bring Christians once more under legalism...Since the Jews of Paul's time spoke of "taking the yoke of the law upon oneself," it is likely that Paul is referring to such an expression here. To the Jews the taking up of the law's yoke was good; indeed, it was the essence of religion. To Paul it was assuming the yoke of slavery. Perhaps Paul was also remembering that Jesus had spoken of Christians taking his yoke upon them (Matt 11:29, 30), but this involves a different kind of service--one that is "easy" and "light"--as the readers of the letter are to see. [EBCNT]

Compare Acts 15.6ff: *"And the apostles and the elders came together to look into this matter. 7 And after there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, "Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe. 8 "And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them, giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He also did to us; 9 and He made no distinction between us and them, cleansing their hearts by faith. 10 "Now therefore why do you put God to the test by placing upon the neck of the disciples a yoke which neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? 11 "But we believe that we are saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus, in the same way as they also are."*

VIII. Differences between Old Testament Redemption and New Testament Redemption

	OT	NT
1	Solidarity with tribe	Solidarity with all people
2	Done for family	Done for enemies
3	Enemies: visible, sporadic, powerful	Enemies: invisible, constant, more powerful
4	Included immediate avenging	Avenging postponed
5	Often involved over-powering	Generally involved substitution
6	Often not explicit as to price	Generally very explicit on price
7	Emphasis on Agent and Results	Emphasis on Agent <i>as</i> Price
8	Commitment/will of the Agent	Submission/yieldedness of the Price
9	Goal: return to status quo	Goal: getting a share in Christ's inheritance!

IX. Concluding Observations

1. Over biblical history, it became apparent that our greatest enemies were somehow inside us...Our very selves stopped us from invoking God into our personal histories more.
2. But there are macro-forces as well, supernatural influences that work in our history.
3. The subtlety of these harsh 'masters' makes it even worse--they sometimes are disguised as 'goodness'. And these masters are deceitful (a la the Garden) with promises of life and fulfillment.
4. The internal oppressors wear us down as well, and reduce our ability and willingness to seek help or freedom.
5. Redemption (*lytron*) focused on the release of slaves (often captured in wartime, or innocent victims of piracy)
6. Slavery in NT times (although vastly different from New World slavery) was not seen as something to be sought, except as a means to a better life in the future. Its 'badness' varied with the 'badness' of the master!
7. There are many forces in our lives that seem to attempt to subjugate us to their agendas.
8. The redemption effected by Jesus was via His offering of Himself *as ransom*.
9. The **emphasis on the price paid** is pervasive, and this differs somewhat from the OT theme.
10. The *lutron* picture involves ransoming a slave, and then granting him/her freedom.
11. The *apolytron* picture focuses on the final and full liberation of the child of God. All oppressive situations and relationships are NOT released in history now (cf. Paul's thorn in the flesh), but the ability to persevere the worst and to transform many of them into 'softer' situations is part of the present freedom. The flow of love and acceptance of others that is to flow from the new heart of believers is supposed to be a microcosm of what the new Universe will be like.
12. A freed slave was NOT without obligations to his/her former owner--there were expectations of personal interaction and response.
13. The *agorazo* picture emphasizes the "price paid" and *the change of ownership*--the believer is a member of the household of God.
14. This picture of slavery is one of enhanced status, responsibility, and opportunity, culminating in full adoption.
15. The major differences in the material situations of slaves derive from (1) the owner's character and status; and (2) the slave's responses.
16. The *peripoieomai* picture shows us the heart of God toward those He paid this dear price for--He sees us as a 'treasure' all His own.
17. The 'loosing' and 'freedom' passages also point out the peaceful place in which we stand. We are no longer bound to religious systems and obligations and requirements for self-improvement; instead, we stand in free acceptance, aggressive affirmation, full pardon, with no barriers whatsoever to exploring a full relationship with the God of life and love.
18. This "release from bondage" occurs in our hearts (via the Spirit), in our relationships with other believers (via the Lord of the church), and in our relationships with the wider created order (via the Father).
19. The NT greatly expands the scope of OT redemption (i.e. enemies, beneficiaries, duration) and reveals the amazing cost of this to our dear-hearted God.