

## **The Wednesday Word, March 1, 2023: Jesus Our Ransom**

Matthew 20:28, "*The Son of Man ... came to give His life a ransom for many.*"

In AD 1193, the English King, Richard I, also known as Richard the Lionheart, was returning from a crusade to the Holy Land. As he passed through Europe, Leopold V captured him in Austria and demanded a ransom for Richard's release. The price was to be 150,000 marks, equal to three tons of silver. This was an enormous ransom demand. But the people of England so loved their king they submitted to extra taxation, and many nobles donated their fortunes for Richard's release. After many months, the money was raised, and King Richard returned to England. That's where we get the expression, "a king's ransom."

But to us, the term "a King's ransom" could better be applied to the tremendous price Jesus, the King of Kings paid for our sins at the cross. This King wasn't being ransomed; He, instead, paid the ransom so His people could be set free. It was and is the most expensive ransom in the history of mankind.

In our text, Matthew 20:28, the word, 'for' is the Greek word "anti" and means "in place of" or "instead of.". Christ, therefore, gave His life in place of and instead of those He redeemed. He paid 'Himself' as their ransom!

Now, this raises a question. To whom was the ransom paid? This is a question theologians have argued about for years. There have been many and varied suggestions offered most of which we don't have to mention. There is, however, one ludicrous suggestion that has been made which says that the ransom was paid to the devil. I beg to disagree. The devil owns nothing, created nothing and never had a new idea in his life. He is not sovereign. He is not the Almighty...why anyone should think of him as being anything other than a doomed rebel is beyond me.

Well then, to whom was the ransom paid? The answer is found in the gospel. As you remember, God's Law said kill the sinner while God's Love said save him. (See Romans 6:23). The question then was how could both the justice and the love of God be satisfied. The Law of God justly demanded a penalty for sin and the love of God provided it. The Justice of God says the sinner must die unless a substitute dies in his place and the love of God provides the substitute.

God's dilemma was solved at a place called Calvary where the justice of God shot bolts of judgment into the sinless, righteous, perfect man Jesus Christ. The love of God absorbed these bolts. Our substitute's blood was poured out and God's love ransomed our lives from the law of God. And that is why God can now declare us righteous apart from the law. (Romans 3:21).

The ransom has been paid and God's justice has been satisfied. Romans 3:26 says it this way, "*that He might be just and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.*" This word, "just" conveys the very heart of the Gospel. It shows us that God could not flippantly abandon His standard. Sinners could not be forgiven on a mere whim and a wave of the royal scepter. Indeed, the death of Christ shows us that God's law could not be violated without awful consequences. If guilty sinners were to escape their just deserts a substitute must be found to take their full punishment. Otherwise, they must certainly die.

The cross shows us that God has never backed down on His threats. He hasn't changed. He is still The Holy God. He still hates sin. However, the cross of Christ and its payment of ransom demonstrate very clearly that God has remained true to His character and has refused to violate His integrity. God, because of the doing and dying of Christ, can treat the unworthy sinner as being innocent and fully righteous and yet can retain His pure and Holy character in doing so.

Blessed be the Lamb of God. He died on the cross, bearing our sins, sustaining the judgment of God, drinking the cup of wrath to the very dregs, and exhausting the vials of God's righteous indignation against man's guilty condition and ways.

In dying, He made atonement for sin before God, defeated Satan in his own domain—destroyed death—annulled it, broke the bonds of the tomb, rose victorious, and ascended in righteousness to the very throne of God, where as a Man, the God/Man, He now sits.

So what did Christ use for currency to pay the ransom for us? The ransom money was the blood. His blood. Stainless, sinless blood. Why the blood? Because it is the only currency accepted in the courtroom of heaven.

Gold couldn't pay the ransom.

Silver couldn't pay the ransom

Precious stones and gems couldn't pay the ransom.

The only acceptable currency with which to pay our ransom was the blood of the Lamb. (See 1 Peter 1:18-19).

We cannot bring our righteousness to God, but God brings His righteousness to us, and justifies His ransomed people freely by His grace, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus. (See Romans 3:24-26).

And that's the Gospel Truth!