

Brief on The Redemption¹

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Men need a redeemer to pay their sin debt to God and save their souls and bodies

Because God gave men a second chance after they sinned against him in the Garden of Paradise, God still loved men. And because he loved them, he had mercy on them. But God could never let his mercy compromise his justice or else God would be unjust and thus be evil. Hence, in order to save men, God's justice demanded that a sacrifice must be made to him in order to pay the sin-debt that men incurred and thus to redeem men and therefore make it possible for them to be saved.

For sins to be forgiven, then, mankind needed a redeemer, the Messiah, to pay their sin debt to God by appeasing God's wrath and satisfying his justice in order for sins to be forgiven and remitted. Even though God is merciful, he is also just. King David says,

“The Lord is merciful and just.” (Ps. 114:5) “Justice and judgment are the preparation of thy throne. Mercy and truth shall go before thy face. (Ps. 88:15)

And Jesus, son of Sirach, says,

“For mercy and wrath are with him. He is mighty to forgive, and to pour out indignation: According as his mercy is, so his correction judgeth a man according to his works.” (Eccus. 16:12-13)

In his justice, God demanded that a price be paid to himself for the sins of men in order to have mercy on men and thus redeem them from their sins and hence make it possible for their sins to be forgiven and gain everlasting life.

The sin debt is paid to God not Satan because the offense was against God. The reason Satan has power and rights over sinful men is because men offended God and followed Satan instead of God, and thus God gave Satan the power and right over men to control and torment them. Satan has power and rights over sinful men in the same way a prison warden has power in rights over his prisoners. And the prison warden, in this case, is a prisoner himself and the boss of the prison. The warden does not have the ultimate power and right but the ruler of the head of the State does. It is the head of the State who put the prisoners in prison, and it is he who can free the prisoners, not the warden of the prison. Hence God, not Satan, is the one who delivers sinners to Satan; and it is God, not Satan who can free them from prison and thus from Satan. Therefore, it is God, not Satan, who must be petitioned, appeased, and satisfied for the sins committed against him. And this is the role that only the Messiah can fulfill who comes to offer himself as a sacrifice to God, not to Satan, to appease God's wrath and to satisfy God's justice and hence pay the sin debt for men and make it possible for their sins to be forgiven and remitted so that they can be saved.

¹ RJMI's Briefs are Long Commentaries contained in the end of *The Catholic Bible*, revised by RJMI.

Mere men cannot redeem themselves, only a God-Man could

Because men sinned against God and sin is an infinite offence against God, only a man who is sinless and infinite can make reparation to God in order to redeem men. And because only God is infinite, this man must also be God and thus be both God and man. And that redeemer is the sinless God-Man, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, who redeemed men by his sacrificial death which he offered up to the God the Father.² God's justice demanded this because he is just, even at the cost of his own life in the person of God the Son. Hence, in God's love for us, he did not spare his himself in the Person of God the Son:

“He [God] ... spared not even his own Son, but delivered him up for us all.” (Rom. 8:32)

Because men sinned against God, a man needs to make reparation to God and in order for men to be redeemed:

“For by a man came death, and by a man the resurrection of the dead. And as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all shall be made alive.” (1 Cor. 15:21-22)

“Wherefore it behoved him [Jesus Christ] in all things to be made like unto his brethren [to be made man], that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest before God that he might be a propitiation for the sins of the people.” (Heb. 2:17)

Because men are guilty of sin, only a sinless man can redeem them by paying the price for sinful men:

“What can be made clean by the unclean?” (Eccus. 34:4)

“Hear, O Lord, my prayer, give ear to my supplication in thy truth. Hear me in thy justice. And enter not into judgment with thy servant, for in thy sight no man living shall be justified.” (Ps. 142:1-2)

“But all things are of God, who hath reconciled us to himself by Christ; and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation. For God indeed was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, not imputing to them their sins; and he hath placed in us the word of reconciliation. For Christ therefore we are ambassadors, God as it were exhorting by us. For Christ, we beseech you, be reconciled to God. Him, who knew no sin, he hath made sin for us that we might be made the justice of God in him.” (2 Cor. 5:18-21)

Because the price of sin is death, the Messiah had to die for the sins of men to redeem them:

“By one man sin entered into this world and by sin death, and so death passed upon all men in whom all have sinned... [However,] Christ died for us, much more therefore, being now justified by his blood, shall we be saved from wrath through him.” (Rom. 5:12, 9)

Even pagans can understand this. In order to prevent feuds from breaking out when a pagan killed another man's family member, the law required that a family member of the killer must be killed to end or prevent feuds. Justice, then, even in pagan societies, demanded a like punishment for a like crime, a like punishment to make reparation. Hence Christ's sacrificial death put an end to death for those who would accept the terms. St. Peter says,

“[Jesus] is on the right hand of God, swallowing down death that we might be made heirs of life everlasting.” (1 Pt. 3:22)

St. Paul also speaks of how Christ put an end to death for the faithful who believe in Christ:

“O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (1 Cor. 15:55)

² See RJMI article *Brief on Jesus is the Messiah*: The Messiah will redeem man.

Because sin is an infinite offense against God, only an infinite person, which can only be God, can pay the price. Hence King David says,

“The Lord will redeem the souls of his servants.” (Ps. 33:23)

And the prophet Isaias says,

“I am the Lord that save thee, and thy Redeemer, the Mighty One of Jacob.” (Isa. 49:26)

Therefore the Messiah has to be not only a sinless man but also God, and he has to die for the sins of men in order to redeem them.

Men cannot redeem themselves from their own sins anymore than perpetually poor men can ever escape poverty. Hence King David says,

“No brother can redeem nor shall [mere] man redeem; he shall not give to God his ransom nor the price of the redemption of his soul, and shall labour forever.” (Ps. 48:8-9)

Even if there were a sinless man since the fall of Adam and Eve (such as the Blessed Virgin Mary), he cannot redeem men because he is a mere man and only a divine person (an infinite person) can pay the infinite sin-debt to God.

Just as it is not within man’s power to create himself, so also it is not within mere man’s power to redeem himself once he fell into sin and incurred spiritual death. Original sin made men spiritually dead and also brought physical death upon them. And only God can bring them back to life, spiritually and physically. Hence, the Messiah has to be not only a sinless man but also God.

Most men do not benefit from the redemption

God loves all men and thus wants all men to be saved:

“Thou hast mercy upon all because thou canst do all things and overlookest the sins of men for the sake of repentance. For thou lovest all things that are and hatest none of the things which thou hast made, for thou didst not appoint, or make any thing hating it.” (Wis. 11:24-25)

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.” (1 Tim. 2:3-4)

Hence the Messiah’s sacrificial death redeems all men and thus pays the sin debt for all men:

“And he is the propitiation for our sins; and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” (1 Jn. 2:2)

“For therefore we labour and are reviled because we hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men, especially of the faithful.” (1 Tim. 4:10)

“Christ also died once for our sins, the just for the unjust, that he might offer us to God, being put to death indeed in the flesh but enlivened in the spirit,” (1 Pt. 3:18)

Yet many times the Word of God says that very few men will be saved and thus most men will be damned and thus end up in the hell:

“The Lord hath looked down from heaven upon the children of men to see if there be any that understand and seek God. They are all gone aside, they are become unprofitable together, there is none that doth good, no not one.” (Ps. 13:2-3)

“For if thy people, O Israel, shall be as the sand of the sea, a remnant of them shall be converted...” (Isa. 10:22)

“Which yet my soul seeketh, and I have not found it. One man among a thousand I have found, a woman among them all I have not found.” (Ectes. 7:29)

“Enter ye in at the narrow gate: for wide is the gate, and broad is the way that leadeth to destruction, and many there are who go in thereat. How narrow is the gate, and strait is the way that leadeth to life: and few there are that find it!” (Mt. 7:13-14)

“Many are called, but few chosen.” (Mt. 20:16)

Therefore, even though the Messiah redeemed all men, most men will not ultimately benefit from the redemption because most men end up in hell. To benefit from their redemption, men must cooperate with God’s grace, believe in God, and obey all of his commandments.

St. Augustine, *Sermon 344*, 428: “4. ...This judgment, which the godless are going to rise again to undergo, is called *the second death* (Apoc. 20:6, 14). So, Christian, why be afraid of this first one? It will come even though you don’t want it to, and it will be there waiting for you, even though you reject it. You can, perhaps, ransom yourself from the barbarians and so save yourself from being killed; you can ransom yourself for a vast sum, not sparing any of your property at all, and stripping your children of their inheritance; and on being ransomed, you die the next day! It’s from the devil you need to be redeemed, who is dragging you off with him to the second death, where the wicked placed on the left hand will hear, ‘Go, you accursed, into the eternal fire, which has been got ready for the devil and his angels’ (Mt 25:41). It’s from this second death you need to be ransomed...

“Finally, consider the means you are helped by. What ransomed you from the barbarians was your silver, what redeemed you from the first death was your money; what has ransomed you from the second death is the blood of your Lord. He had the blood to redeem us with; and that’s why he accepted to have blood, so that there would be something for him to shed for our redemption. The blood of your Lord, if you wish it so, was given for you; if you don’t wish it so, it wasn’t given for you. Yes, but perhaps you’re saying, ‘My God had the blood to redeem me with; but he has already given it all, when he suffered. What is there left for him to give for me?’ That’s the great thing about it, that he gave it once only, and gave it for all. The blood of Christ is salvation for the one who wishes it so, torment for the one who refuses it.”

What good, then, can the redemption do for obstinate sinners who want to go on sinning forever? Unrepentant obstinate sinners spit in the face of their redemption. They say to God, “We do not want your redemption. Leave us alone. We do not want to go to your heaven.” If God ever let them benefit from the redemption and thus be saved, then heaven would be hell and God would be Satan. God would be evil and unjust for letting obstinate sinners live among the righteous in his heavenly kingdom and earthly paradise to come, and he would be a liar for calling such a condition heaven or paradise.

Therefore, to ultimately benefit from the redemption and thus be saved during the New Covenant era, men must believe in Jesus Christ and the Catholic faith, get baptized into the Catholic Church and thus have their original sin and other sins remitted, obey all of God’s commandments, confess any sins they committed since their baptism, and die in a state of grace (that is, not guilty of mortal sin):

“He that believeth in the Son, hath life everlasting; but he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.” (Jn. 3:36)

“Whosoever revolteth, and continueth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God. He that continueth in the doctrine, the same hath both the Father and the Son.” (2 Jn. 1:9)

“He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved: but he that believeth not shall be condemned.” (Mk. 16:16)

“And if he will not hear them: tell the [Catholic] Church. And if he will not hear the church, let him be to thee as the heathen and publican.” (Mt. 18:17)

“If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments.” (Mt. 19:17)

“Confess therefore your sins...” (Jam. 5:16)

“My little children, these things I write to you, that you may not sin. But if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the just: And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for those of the whole world.” (1 Jn. 2:1-2)

“And all nations shall be gathered together before him, and he shall separate them one from another, as the shepherd separateth the sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left.” (Mt. 25:32-33)

Athanasian Creed, 4th century: “Whosoever willet to be saved needs above all to hold the Catholic faith. Which faith except every one do keep whole and undefiled, he will without doubt perish eternally.”

However, a Catholic who is in a state of grace and then falls away and dies in mortal sin does not ultimately benefit from his redemption even though he temporally benefited from his redemption when his original sin and other sins were remitted:

“Yea, if I shall say to the just that he shall surely live, and he, trusting in his justice, commit iniquity, all his justices shall be forgotten and in his iniquity which he hath committed, in the same shall he die.” (Ez. 33:13)

“For if, flying from the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they be again entangled in them and overcome: their latter state is become unto them worse than the former.” (2 Pt. 2:20)

Whereas, a man who lived and died as a pagan was never just and therefore never benefited from his redemption.

The bodies of the elect do not benefit from the redemption until the General Judgment

The Messiah's sacrificial death redeems not only souls but also bodies. While faithful souls benefit from the redemption immediately, the bodies of the elect do not benefit from the redemption until the General Judgment:

“For we know that every creature groaneth and travaileth in pain, even till now. And not only it, but ourselves also, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption of the sons of God, the redemption of our body.” (Rom. 8:22-23)

“Behold, I tell you a mystery. We shall all indeed rise again: but we shall not all be changed. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise again incorruptible: and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption; and this mortal must put on immortality. And when this mortal hath put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: Death is swallowed up in victory. O death, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy sting?” (1 Cor. 15:51-55)

(See RJMI article *Brief on The Particular Judgment and the General Judgment*.)

The earth will not benefit from the redemption until the second coming of Jesus Christ

The Messiah's sacrificial death also redeemed the earth. But the earth will not benefit from its redemption until the second coming of Jesus Christ when he purifies the earth from all evil and turns it into an earthly paradise where there is no death or sorrow. And Christ, the King of kings, and Mary, the Queen of queens, will rule the everlasting earthly paradise from the New Jerusalem that came down from heaven. (See RJMI article, *Brief on The Everlasting Earthly Paradise.*)

For the glory of God; in honor of the Blessed Virgin Mary, St. Michael, St. Joseph, Ss. Joachim and Anne, St. John the Baptist, the other angels and saints; and for the salvation of men

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