

Redemption: Manumission from Slave Market of Sin, Freedom to become Bondslave of God; the Truth Will Set You Free, John 8:31-32; Those Who Are Slaves Can Be Free: Daniel, et al., 5th Cycle by Nebuchadnezzar, Jeremiah's Prophecy, Jer 25:1-7

As a bondslave, the believer is free from earthly authorities and is only subservient to them where mandated by the Lord. The state of freedom and the environment of freedom mentioned in the verse describe the resultant Zeitgeist of a client nation. Believers are provided a system of authority that creates an environment of authority in which they may function freely.

However, the closing phrase "use it as bondslaves to God" indicates that this freedom cannot be maintained unless those who have been redeemed by God are willing to do the work of a slave on His behalf.

Manumission is the release of a person from slavery. The slavery in question is toward one's genetically imposed tyranny of the old sin nature.

We have noted how we are born equal in the sense of being *tabula rasa* at birth and equal before the bar of justice. (This principle is drawn from Romans 2:11, "There is no partiality with God." Also see: Deuteronomy 10:17 and Acts 10:34.) We are also equal in another more ominous sense by having a genetically formed sin nature resident in our DNA.

How can a person in slavery be released from the slave market of sin? Through manumission which theologically is called redemption.

Redemption: The saving work of Jesus Christ on the cross whereby all humanity is bought from the slave market of sin in which they were born and delivered to the freedom of grace. Redemption is realized when a person is born again by faith alone in Christ alone.¹

The unbeliever is incarcerated into this slave market at physical birth by the imputation of Adam's original sin to the person's genetically formed sin nature. Therefore, we are born physically alive but spiritually dead.

The Pharisees overheard the Lord speaking to a group of believers in John 8 where He said,

John 8:31b - "If [ἐάν *ean*: 3CC] you continue in My word [positive volition to doctrine], then you are truly disciples of Mine,

v. 32 - and you will know the truth [ἀλήθεια, *alētheia*: doctrine], and the truth will set you free [ἐλευθερώω, *eleutheroō*: to release from bondage into an environment of freedom to serve God]."

The Lord is addressing believers and his message is a challenge to their volition to be continuously positive to His teachings. If they do, then they will acquire the same wisdom that He possesses and communicates to them. The end result will be the freedom to serve God.

¹ R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Slave Market of Sin*, 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1994), 43.

The word for truth is *alētheia*. It is a compound noun made up of a prefixed alpha privative which negates the meaning of the attached derivative of the verb **λανθάνω, *lanthanō***: to conceal, to be unknown, to be hidden. Thus *alētheia* refers to the unveiling of that which is concealed. The information the Lord communicates is knowledge that goes beyond what can be understood by the natural mind and is described in the New Testament Greek as **ἐπίγνωσις, *epignōsis***: a technical term for the decisive knowledge of God which is implied in conversion to the Christian faith.²

Truth is unknown to the unbeliever. He is capable of knowing things that are *true*, e.g., academic knowledge, but *truth* contained in the Word of God is beyond his perceptive abilities.

John 8:31 indicates that a number of the Lord's students had believed in Him for salvation and are the objects of His comments in the following verse.

They have *epignōsis* knowledge of Jesus as Messiah and He remarks that if they want to be His disciples they need to continue their positive volition toward His teaching. If they do, the third class condition in verse 31b, then:

John 8:32 - "... you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

This verse is oft quoted, is emblazoned over the doors of many universities, and proclaimed by those who demonstrate for participation in the environment of freedom. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s proclamation "Free at last, free at last; great God Almighty, I'm free at last," was a plea for establishment freedom. But the freedom referenced in the Bible is not of earthly freedom but redemption from the slavery of the sin nature's control over the life.

It is incongruous for a believer to plead for establishment freedom when he enjoys eternal manumission from the slave market of sin and the resultant freedom of the heavenly *politeuma*. We are to be obedient to those who hold legitimate positions of authority. This principle is stated in:

Ephesians 6:5 - Slaves/employees/citizens, be obeying your leaders according to the standard of the flesh [laws of divine establishment], with respect and maximum effort, by means of integrity [nonhypocritical] as unto Christ [function toward human authority as unto the Lord],

v. 6 - Not according to eyeservice [obsequiousness], as men-pleasers, but as slaves/employees/citizens belonging to Christ, constantly doing the will of God from the soul.

When the fifty Jewish youth of the tribe of Judah were taken as POWs to Chaldea by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 B.C., Daniel oriented and adjusted to his circumstance. He was inflexible with regard to the essential doctrines but flexible with regard to the nonessentials. As a result he was able to evangelize Nebuchadnezzar and his influence within the Chaldean government led to many advantages that he and his fellow captives enjoyed.

² Rudolf Bultmann, "γινώσκω," in *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, ed. Gerhard Kittel, trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1964), 1:707.

It is truth that makes men free. This freedom is designed for service to God and temporal circumstances must be evaluated from a biblical worldview. Daniel (Beltshazzar), Hananiah (Shadrach), Mishael (Meshach), Azariah (Abed-nego) and over forty others were of the tribe of Judah. They were teenagers. They were POWs in a strange land with a strange language and a strange religion.

Their capture was in the plan of God. Their jobs were to orient to their new environment and to use their wisdom to maintain their faith with an eye on a future return to Israel, a rebuilding of the temple, and a return to temple worship. God allowed these fifty boys, the crème de la crème of Jewish aristocracy, to be taken into captivity. He knew their genetics. They were the offspring of Judah, the leadership tribe and the bloodline of all the kings in the Davidic line.

The task given to Daniel and his compatriots was to hold the line until the Lord would restore Israel. They knew their doctrine and therefore knew of Jeremiah's prophecy that forecasted seventy-years of captivity for the people of Judah.

The circumstances surrounding this prophecy are articulated by Jeremiah and a brief reading of that context will amplify similar circumstances facing the United States today. We will note the first eleven verses of Jeremiah 25.

The following excerpts are from Charles L. Feinberg's *Jeremiah*:

Prophecy of the Babylonian captivity (25:1–38). In 605 B.C., the Babylonians defeated the Egyptians at the Battle of Carcamish [Carchemish] \kär'-ka-mish\, thus bringing to an end the domination of Palestine by Pharaoh Neco of Egypt. Carcamish was one of the decisive battles of the world because it affected the course of history in western Asia. Through it Jeremiah was enabled by the Lord to see the working out of the divine purposes of judgment on Judah by means of Babylon.

Israel's rejection of the prophetic ministry, 25:1–7:

Jeremiah 25:1 - The word came to Jeremiah concerning all the people of Judah in the fourth year of Jehoiakim son of Josiah king of Judah, which was the first year of Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon.

v. 2 - So Jeremiah the prophet said to all the people of Judah and to all those living in Jerusalem:

v. 3 - "For twenty-three years—from the thirteenth year of Josiah son of Amon \ā'-mon\ king of Judah until this very day—the word of the Lord has come to me and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened.

v. 4 - "And though the Lord has sent you all his servants the prophets again and again, you have not listened or paid any attention.

v. 5 - "They said, 'Turn now, each of you, from you evil ways and your evil practices, and you can stay in the land the Lord gave to you and your fathers for ever and ever.

v. 6 - "Do not follow other gods to serve and worship them; do not provoke me to anger with what your hands have made. Then I will not harm you.'

v. 7 - “But you did not listen to me,” declares the Lord, “and you have provoked me with what you hands have made, and you have brought harm to yourselves.”³

³ Charles L. Feinberg, *Jeremiah: A Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1982), 174.