

REDEMPTION IN II PETER 2:1 **(A Doctrinal Study on the Extent of the Atonement)**

Dr. Gary D. Long

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The Greek Words for Redemption

The Greek words in the Bible from which the English translators get the word “redeem” (purchase, buy), when used in a salvation (soteriological) context, always (with II Peter 2:1 being the only contended exception) mean deliverance from sin by blood; that is, by the payment of a ransom, which is the “precious blood of Christ” (I Pet. 1:19). For example, the Greek word *lutrōō* (redeem), in its related verb and noun forms—both simple (*lutron*) and compound (*antilutron* and *apolutrōsis*), is used some eighteen times in the New Testament. Fifteen times it is used in a salvation context and reflects the substitutionary nature of Christ’s sacrificial offering as a high priest. The price is His blood and the result is deliverance from sin. Three times it is used in a non-salvation context to refer to temporal (physical) deliverance from danger or oppression. In this observation the Calvinistic universalists agree with the historic Calvinists. It is in the word *agorazō* (usually translated “bought”) that support is claimed for universal redemption. The prefixed form of *agorazō*, *exagorazō* (also translated “redeem”) is admitted by both four- and five-point Calvinists to be a term restricted to the elect of God (see Gal. 3:13;4:5). Therefore, the issue on the terms for redemption centers upon the word “to buy” (*agorazō*).

The Greek Word for “bought”(Agorazō)

The uncompounded verb form “to buy” (*agorazō*) is used thirty times in the New Testament. It is used twenty-four times in an obvious non-redemptive context, both literally and metaphorically, with all but two of the twenty-four occurrences referring to such things as a monetary purchase of a field (Matt. 13:44) or food (John 6:5). In addition, it is used five times in a salvation context where the purchase price (i.e., price, blood, lamb) is either stated in the verse or made explicit in the immediate context. In each of these references the context clearly restricts it to believers (see I Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). Finally, it is used once in the well known controversial passage of II Peter 2:1. And strictly speaking (i.e., from the Greek words which have a redemptive connotation), it is upon this verse that the Calvinistic universalist builds his case for universal redemption.

Inconsistency in Modified Calvinism

Before examining II Peter 2:1, it is observed that, in an attempt to prove their case for universal redemption, some modified Calvinists make a distinction between the Greek redemptive words *lutrōō* (redeem) and *agorazō* (buy) in their simple and compound forms. But they are not always consistent in holding to their distinctions between the simple and compound forms. For example, one writes that the word forms of *lutrōō* (including its compound forms) are “not used of all men indiscriminately but only of believers.”¹ He states that the noun form (*lutron*) teaches the releasing or setting free of those for whom it was purchased. He then adds that Paul uses the compound noun form (*antilutron*) “in relation to Christ’s sacrifice for men in I Timothy 2:6,² and that it “clearly teaches substitution.”³ These statements a particular redemptionist would have no difficulty in accepting. But when the particular redemptionist says Christ gave “his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45), the modified Calvinist is quick to say, “Yes, but Christ also gave himself a ransom for all” (meaning all mankind without exception) and they hasten to I Timothy 2:6 for their support, apparently forgetting that this verse contains the compound noun form *antilutron*. The consistent Calvinist then rightly asks: “Have not all the modified Calvinist’s distinctions between the simple and compound forms of *lutrōō* (redeem) and *agorazō* (buy) vanished?” For example, two modern Calvinistic universalist theologians⁴ list I Timothy 2:6 as one of their scriptural proofs that the extent of the atonement includes all mankind. But, what has happened to their meaning of the compound word for “ransom” (*antilutron*) in I Timothy 2:6? By one’s own definition, in another context where the same compound term in this very verse is discussed, it is stated that this word is used “only of believers.”⁵ But if it is used “only of believers,” how can it include all mankind? Is this not a contradiction? (One wonders if such inconsistency results from unguarded statements or if it is the logical result of confusing the contextual teaching of Scripture on the design of the atonement.) To follow their logic would mean a setting free of all mankind, but this is teaching a universal salvation, is it not? Perhaps, then, the word “all” in I Timothy 2:6 is not to be understood as absolute for all mankind without exception. Maybe it should be understood in a relative sense as it is some 500

¹ Robert P. Lightner, *The Death Christ Died—A Case for Unlimited Atonement* (Des Plaines, Illinois: Regular Baptist Press, 1967), p. 76.

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, p. 64.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 64; and Lewis Sperry Chafer, *Systematic Theology* (8 vol.; Dallas Seminary Press, 1948), III, 204.

⁵ Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, p. 76.

times elsewhere in Scripture.⁶ But is this not what the particular redemptionist has affirmed all along?

II Peter 2:1 and Two Key Words

Turning now to II Peter 2:1, Peter writes:

There were false prophets also among the people, even as there shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the Lord that bought them and bring upon themselves swift destruction.

There are two key words in this verse which have caused great theological debate. The principal one, as previously stated, is *agorazō*, which is translated “bought.” The other word is *despotēs*, which is translated “Lord.” Almost every universal redemptionist⁷ says this verse teaches that the false prophets, who are obviously non-elect, are nevertheless bought (redeemed) by the blood of Christ. Yet they say, since these false prophets continue to deny Christ and never believe, there must be an aspect of redemptive (as reflected in this verse by the word *agorazō*) which was designed for the non-elect as well as for the elect. The issue between the modified and five-point Calvinists, therefore, is twofold. First, it must be determined whether “Lord” (*despotes*) refers to God the Father or to God the Son as mediator, or to God the Father or God the Son as sovereign Lord. Second, it must be decided whether “bought” (*agorazō*) is to be understood redemptively (referring to salvation or soteriologically), as most modified Calvinists claim, or non-redemptively (non-soteriologically), as most consistent Calvinists claim.

Lord (*Despotēs*)

Concerning the first issue in relation to *despotēs*, the following points are observed. First, it is not God the Father who functions as mediator in Scripture; rather it is God the Son. Second, the nearly parallel account to II Peter 2:1 in Jude 4 supports attributing *despotes* to the Son and not to the Father. Although some grammarians say Jude 4 distinguishes the Father from the Son, the grammatical rule known as the Granville Sharp rule seems to establish that the phrase “our Lord Jesus Christ” is only a further description of the “Lord (*despotēs*) God” in the preceding phrase. Due primarily to this grammatical support, it seems best to understand *despotēs* in II Peter 2:1 as referring to

⁶ John Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ* (reprinted from Vol. X of Owen’s Works, published in 1852 by Johnstone and Hunter, Edinburgh, and ed. by William H. Goold; London: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1959), p. 232.

⁷ Ralph Wardlaw, a nineteenth century four-point Calvinist theologian from Scotland, did not hold to this interpretation (see the discussion on the Christian charity view which follows).

Christ. Therefore, at this point, it may be stated that *despotes* in II Peter 2:1 refers to God the Son and not to God the Father. But to say that II Peter 2:1 is speaking of Christ lends absolutely no weight to the modified Calvinist position, for it must be established whether *despotes* can rightly refer in this verse, or any verse for that matter, to Christ as mediator. This leads to the third point, namely, that *despotes* is used about thirty times in the whole of Scripture—twenty times in the Greek Septuagint translation of the Old Testament and ten times in the New Testament. But never does it refer to the Father or the Son as mediator unless II Peter 2:1 be the exception. And if this be the case, the burden of proof rests upon those who wish to make it the exception, does it not? Yet, this writer has not found a modified Calvinist attempting to do this. It is assumed. It is completely ignored that *despotês* is never used as a redemptive title for anyone, not even of Christ in Jude 4, the only other place where *despotês* is used of Christ. Rather the dominant use of *despotes* in both the Old and New Testaments is of God as “absolute sovereign”; that is, as “sovereign Lord” and owner of each member of the human race. Luke’s account in Acts 4:24 is a clear example of this meaning. There Luke writes of a company of believers who, upon hearing Peter and John’s report, “lifted up their voice to God with one accord, and said, Lord (*despotes*), thou art God, which hast made heaven, and earth, and the sea and all that in them is.” Vine’s statement that *despotês* refers to one who has “absolute ownership and uncontrolled power”⁸ could find no better support.

Finally, although *despotes* sometimes has a meaning which expresses the authority that a master has over his servant (see Luke 2:29), yet it still does not express a meaning of mediatorship. It is concluded, therefore, that *despotes* in II Peter 2:1 refers to God the Son as sovereign Lord and not to God the Son as mediator. This does not mean that Christ as mediator is not sovereign; rather it is to acknowledge the fact that when Christ is referred to as mediator, one of His redemptive titles, such as “Lamb of God,” is always used or the redemptive price is made explicit or stated in the context. But that is not the case here. Search and see.

Bought (*Agorazō*)

The fact that Lord (*despotes*) refers to Christ as sovereign Lord in II Peter 2:1, however, is not nearly so important, from a theological standpoint, as the usage of the verb “bought” (*agorazō*). Concerning this second Greek word and the issue whether or not *agorazō* is to be understood redemptively or non-redemptively, the following points should be made. First, in the Greek Septuagint *agorazō* and its related noun forms are used some twenty times to translate three Hebrew words (*sabar*, *qanhh*, and *laqah*); yet it is never used to translate the two great redemptive words—those translated “redeem” (*gā’al*) and “ransom” or

⁸ W. B. Vine, *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* (4 vols., in one; London: Oliphants Ltd., 1940), III, 46.

“purchase” (pādāh). Second, of its thirty occurrences in the New Testament, *agorazō* is never used in a salvation context (unless II Peter 2:1 is the exception) without the technical term “price” (*times*—a technical term for the blood of Christ) or its equivalent being stated or made explicit in the context (see I Cor. 6:20; 7:23; Rev. 5:9; 14:3-4). Third, in each of the latter five references the context clearly restricts the extent of *agorazō* (regardless of what it means) to believers—never to non-believers. Fourth, a word study of *agorazō*, in both the Greek Old and New Testaments, reveals that the word itself does not include the payment price. When it is translated with a meaning “to buy,” whether in a salvation or non-salvation context, a payment price is always stated or made explicit by the context. Fifth, in contexts where no payment price is stated or implied, *agorazō* may often be better translated as “acquire” or “obtain”. Sixth, *agorazō* is never used in Scripture in a hypothetical sense unless II Peter 2:1 be the exception. Rather it is always used in a context where the buying or acquiring actually takes place.

Four Interpretations of II Peter 2:1

How the words “Lord” (*despotes*) and “bought” (*agorazō*) specifically relate to II Peter 2:1 may be seen by the ways in which this verse is interpreted. It is interpreted in a least four ways. Two of these four interpretations may be properly categorized under a heading entitled “soteriological interpretations” and two under a heading entitled “non-soteriological interpretations.”

Two Soteriological Interpretations

The two soteriological interpretations that teach that salvation is in view may be subtitled the “spiritual redemption view” and the “Christian charity view.”

The Spiritual Redemption View

The spiritual redemption view is held by most modified Calvinists. A recent proponent of this view writes concerning II Peter 2:1 that “the purchase price of redemption was paid for by the Lord for even the false prophets and teachers even though they quite obviously never accept it.”⁹ This view maintains that this verse extends the redemption of Christ to all mankind which includes the non-elect.¹⁰ Hence, Christ’s redemption is only potentially or hypothetically designed for the non-elect. That this is a fair statement concerning the Calvinistic universalists is seen in the comment made by the same writer when he states: “It cannot be avoided that Peter is here saying, in words unmistakably clear, Christ paid the ransom price even for those who deny Him.”¹¹ To get away from the

⁹ Lightner, *The Death Christ Died*, p. 75.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 76.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

hypothetical label, it is often said by those who hold to universal redemption that Christ had to die for the non-elect in order that they might be justly condemned for their sin of unbelief. But is not rejection of the eternal power and Godhead in nature apart from the sin of unbelief in Christ enough for God to justly condemn (Rom. 1:20)? And what about imputed sin, the biblical fact that all mankind sinned in Adam (see Rom. 5:12ff)? Is God unjust to impute the guilt and penalty of Adam's one sin to his posterity? If so, then based upon the same principle, is God unjust to impute the righteousness of Christ to His posterity? God forbid, for otherwise we do not have a substitutionary atonement for the guilt and penalty of our sins and we stand or fall before God on our own individual merit.

Valid objections can be made against the spiritual redemption view by observing what it assumes, teaches and ignores. First, the word "Lord (*despotes*) is assumed to refer to Christ as mediator. Yet it has already been demonstrated that *despotes* in II Peter 2:1 refers to Christ as sovereign Lord. This means that He has absolute power and authority over all His creation including the false teachers because He is their creator. Second, *agorazō* is interpreted redemptively to teach a substitutionary payment by the blood of Christ. And since the false teachers are said to be "bought," *agorazō* is assumed to include all the non-elect of all ages. But *agorazō* is never used in a salvation context without a ransom price being mentioned. And a ransom price is not stated or inferred in the verse or in the context. Third, because of their theological inconsistency, the universal redemptionists do not attempt to explain how II Peter 2:1 can teach that Christ died a substitutionary death for the false teachers, who in verse 12 of the same chapter are described "as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed" even as they "were before of old ordained to this condemnation" (Jude 4). An explanation of this dilemma is ignored because the universal redemptionist's position presupposes that Christ died for the false teachers. Because of their inconsistency, those who hold to the spiritual redemption view are logically saying, in effect, that: "The Lord, by imparting a knowledge of the gospel and working a professed acknowledgement of it and subjection unto it, separated and delivered from the world certain ones that professed to be saints outwardly, who in reality were wolves and hypocrites ordained to condemnation. Therefore, Christ shed His blood for the redemption and salvation of all the reprobates and damned persons in the world who have lived or will live." Does this make any sense? Does the Bible teach this?

The Christian charity view

The Christian charity view is held by both modified and consistent Calvinists. For example, Wardlaw, a modified Calvinist, writes that II Peter 2:1 "may be easily explained on the principle . . . that men are spoken of according to professions, and according to the credibility of the profession, in the estimate of Christian

charity.”¹² This interpretation is understood as referring to salvation only in the sense of Christian charity, that is, by taking the false teachers at their word.

There is much merit in this view, for verse 1 seems to mean that the false teachers are professing to be what in reality they are not. Furthermore, in verse 1, Peter alludes to the phrase “thy father that hath bought thee,” found in Deuteronomy 32:6. And Moses may well be including those in Deuteronomy 32:5 who are not “his (God’s) children” within the statements of verse 6 where he says, “O foolish people” who “do thus requite the Lord.” That is, Moses, out of charity for God’s covenant love toward His people Israel, may include those who are described in verse 5 as a “perverse and crooked generation” with the meaning that Paul theologically develops in Romans 9:4-6.

Who are Israelites; to whom pertaineth the adoption, and the glory, and the covenants, and the giving of the law, and the service of God, and the promises; Whose are the fathers, and of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, *who is over all*, God blessed for ever. Amen. Not as though the word of God hath taken none effect. For *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel* (italics mine).

The major weakness of the Christian charity view is that it does not give proper significance to the biblical meaning of “Lord” (*despotes*) and “bought” (*agorazō*). This view, as usually understood, takes *despotes* to mean Christ as mediator and *agorazō* to mean spiritual redemption—both of course out of charity for the profession, not that in reality this redemption is true of the false teachers. This view, therefore, does not take into full account: (1) that *despotēs* should be understood in the sense of sovereign Lord, as a word study supports; that is, in the sense that Paul writes in Romans 9:5, that “Christ . . . is over all”; (2) that *agorazō* should be understood in the sense of either God’s having acquired Israel nationally as a covenant nation as Deuteronomy 32:6b teaches, and as God having made or created them nationally as a covenant nation as Deuteronomy 32: 6b also teaches (see the sovereign creation view below). If this view could establish that *agorazō* was used redemptively in II Peter 2:1 out of Christian charity (and verses 20-22 do lend some credence to this view), it would not support the universal redemptionist’s spiritual redemption view because Peter would be speaking out of charity based upon the false teachers’ outward profession. Only because of the normal theological usage of *despotes* and

¹² Some object to this view by asserting that the false teachers are only made manifest by their actions and not their words; otherwise it would be difficult to understand how these teachers could gain any hearing with authority if they denied Christ’s deity or His existence, especially in a Christian congregation. However, is it not true that, in many professing congregations, gaining a hearing by denying the deity of Christ is common place? For sure the providential existence of false teachers within professing Christendom, in the sense of II Peter 2:1, is only temporary because future judgment upon them is as certain as the fact that judgment fell upon Sodom and Gomorrhah.

agorazō does the writer favor the sovereign creation view below.

Two Non-Soteriological Interpretations

The two non-soteriological interpretations that teach that salvation is not in view may be subtitled the “temporal deliverance view” and the “sovereign creation view.”

The temporal deliverance view

The temporal deliverance view is held by some five-point Calvinists. They say that in II Peter 2:1, Peter is speaking of the false teachers, not in respect to the reality of eternal redemption but that, by their professing to be believers because of their “knowledge of the Lord” (vs. 20), they are temporally (physically) delivered from the pollutions of the world (vs. 20). The Scriptures do, at times, speak of temporal deliverance. For example, the physical deliverance of Israel out of Egyptian bondage by sovereign might (see Deut. 7:8; Exod. 15:16). To say that this is analogous to II Peter 2:1 (i.e., that the false teachers escape the pollutions of the world by their outward profession as believers), it must be established that the false teachers in II Peter 2:1 actually profess to be believers both in word and deed. There is good substantiation for saying that they do. For example, the contexts of II Peter 2:1 and Jude 4-19 reveal that the false teachers actually deny “the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ” (Jude 4) both in word and deed. These two contexts state that the false teachers deny His deity and may infer that they deny His existence.¹² They deny the “Lord that bought them” by their actions (II Pet. 2:2) and “speak evil of the things that they understand not” (II Pet. 2:12). They are compared with the ungodly of Noah’s day and the inhabitants of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha, who did not believe or profess to believe God (II Pet. 2:5-6; see Jude 7). In addition they are spots and blemishes (II Pet. 2:13; see Deut. 32:5) who follow the way of Balaam (vs. 15) and Cain (Jude 11).

The major weakness of this view, like that of the Christian charity view, is that it does not give full significance to the meaning of “bought” (*agorazō*) or to the context of Deuteronomy 32:6. The temporal deliverance view, therefore, has support comparable to that of the Christian charity view. In reality both views are quite similar, having some significant contextual support. Neither, however, supports the modified Calvinists’ spiritual redemption view, which lacks both theological and contextual support.

The sovereign creation view

The sovereign creation view interprets II Peter 2:1 non-redemptively as referring to the creation of the false teachers by Christ their sovereign Lord. There are at least four significant points that support this view. First, this interpretation gives

proper significance to both the Greek Old and New Testaments' usage of "Lord" (*despotes*) and "bought" (*agorazō*). Second, this view seeks to interpret this verse in the light of the context, historical background, and purpose of the epistle including Peter's use of the Old Testament, especially Deuteronomy 32:5-6.

In II Peter 2:1, Peter intentionally alludes to the phrase "thy father that hath bought thee" in Deuteronomy 32:6.¹³ Immediately following the phrase "thy father that hath *bought* thee" are the words "hath he not *made* thee, and *established* thee?" The three Hebrew words translated "bought," "made" and "established" are significant in the sovereign creation view for, in the Hebrew, they mean, in context, "to acquire," "to make" or "to constitute" and "to establish" a nation. The meaning of the Greek Septuagint translation of these three words is "acquire," "make" and "establish" ("create"¹⁴). Although the Greek word translated "bought" or "acquire" in Deuteronomy 32:6 is *ptaomai* and *agorazō*, a word study of these two terms reveals that they are closely related and are used interchangeably in both the Old and New Testaments.¹⁵ A strong case can be established, therefore, from a contextual word study, to substantiate that Peter's allusion to Deuteronomy 32:6 is for the purpose of emphasizing that it is the pre-incarnate Jehovah, the sovereign Lord who owns the covenant nation Israel, because He bought (acquired), made and established them for the purpose of being a covenant and privileged people who were to be unto Him "a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation" (Exod. 19:6). The fact that in Peter's use of Deuteronomy 32:6 he refers only to "bought," the first of the three words in the phrase "bought, make and establish," is explained by the manner in which New Testament writers commonly allude to Old Testament references without directly quoting them. Peter, therefore, only refers to the first word, "bought," using it as a summary for all three words¹⁶ to stress the idea of creating and acquiring Israel as a covenant

¹³ That Peter is alluding to Deuteronomy 32:6 in II Peter 2:1 may be seen by observing the context of both passages. This is further supported by the fact that Peter alludes to Deuteronomy 32:5 in verse 13. The author of this pamphlet is not the first to say that Peter alludes to Deuteronomy 32:6 in verse 1, for the same observation has been made by both consistent and inconsistent Calvinistic commentators and Bible teachers.

¹⁴ It is interesting that one of the better Greek manuscripts (Codex Alexandrinus) translates the Hebrew word in this verse for "established" by the Greek word *kitzō*, which means "to create."

¹⁵ For a comprehensive word study see Appendix I of the author's "Theological Proof for Definite Atonement" (unpublished Master's Thesis, Dallas Theological Seminary, Dallas, Texas, 1969), pp. 93-101; 108-12.

¹⁶ When a New Testament writer refers to the Old Testament, his use of one word or phrase to summarize the Old Testament context is not uncommon. In addition, those who are not familiar with the New Testament writers' use of the Old Testament should keep in mind that an allusion is just as valid and authoritative as a direct quote, for all Scripture is inspired by God and the Holy Spirit certainly has the right to move the New Testament writers to refer to the

nation as the context of Deuteronomy 32 teaches. Therefore, the point that Peter seems to be making in referring to Deuteronomy 32:6 in II Peter 2:1 is that “just as God had sovereignly acquired Israel out of Egypt (including ‘his children’ as well as the ‘spot’ among them which was ‘a perverse and crooked generation,’ Deut. 32:5) in order to make her a covenant nation spiritually and nationally because He had created her for this purpose, so Christ, the sovereign Lord, acquired the false teachers (spots and blemishes, II Pet. 2:13) in order to make them a part of the covenant nation of God in the flesh because He had created them, within the mystery of His providence, for the purpose of bringing glory to Himself through their foreordination unto condemnation (see II Peter 2:12; Jude4).”

Therefore, in reply to the false teachers, Peter might well have repeated the words of the apostle Paul in Romans 9:20-24.

Nay but, O man who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the *thing formed* say to *him that formed it*, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter *power* over the clay, of the same lump to *make* one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour? What if God, willing to shew his wrath, and to make his *power* known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath *fitted to destruction*: And that he might make know the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he had before prepared unto glory, Even *us, whom he hath called not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles* (italics mine)?

Third, the sovereign creation view is supported by the context of II Peter 2 and its parallel in Jude 4-19 (see II Pet. 2:12; Jude 4). A fourth reason to support the sovereign creation view lies in the fact that it is illogical to say Christ died a substitutionary atonement for those who are ordained unto destruction (see II Peter 2:12; Jude 4; Rom. 9:22). Yet, God in His grace is longsuffering to those who are ordained to destruction (e.g., Judas). The definite atonement position alone is consistent with the doctrine of retribution.¹⁷ The identity of the elect and non-elect before the salvation of the former is known only to God. And well it should be, otherwise evangelists would not be obedient to God’s ordained method of taking the gospel to every creature (see Matt. 28:19). But the responsibility to preach a universal gospel does not nullify the truth of God’s eternal, immutable, and determinate counsel concerning election and reprobation.

Old Testament without quoting it exactly. For example, no orthodox believer would doubt the validity of Romans 1:17b, which refers to Habakkuk 2:4. Yet, Paul does not quote Habakkuk 2:4 word for word.

¹⁷ The writer has yet to find a modified Calvinist who biblically defends his belief in universal redemption from the standpoint of retribution, not even in Douty’s recent work. Cf. Norman F. Douty, *The Death of Christ* (Swengel, Pennsylvania: Reiner Publications, 1972), p. 120.

The sovereign creation view thus interprets II Peter 2:1 to mean: “There shall be false teachers among you, who privily shall bring in damnable heresies, even denying the sovereign Lord who created¹⁸ them and bring upon themselves swift destruction.”

If there were more textual support for “create” (*ktizō*) in Deuteronomy 32:6 (see note 53, p. 61), the sovereign creation view could be more dogmatically acclaimed as the best interpretation of II Peter 2:1. It should be observed, however, that this view is quite close to the Christian charity view, especially when the Christian charity view understands “Lord” (*despotes*) to mean sovereign Lord and “bought” (*agorazō*) to mean “acquire” as the latter term relates to the acquiring of a covenant people both nationally and spiritually in the sense of Romans 9:5-6. The Christian charity view understood in this manner properly comes under the non-soteriological heading instead of the soteriological heading and appears, in this writer’s judgment, to have considerable merit. Viewed in this manner, it is practically synonymous with the temporal deliverance view. Therefore, it is concluded that any one of these three interpretations could adequately convey Peter’s thought in II Peter 2:1. The sovereign creation view is preferred, however, because of the theological and contextual manner in which “Lord” (*despotes*) and “bought” (*agorazō*) are used in Scripture. But the writer is not dogmatic in this preference. He is dogmatic, however, in stating that, *the spiritual redemption view has no consistent theological or contextual support*. And this is the point that this doctrinal study has attempted to establish. The reader will have to judge for himself if this has been accomplished.

Conclusion

To conclude this study on the relationship of redemption to the priestly sacrifice of Christ, it should be noted that the Scripture specifically presents Christ’s priestly work as accomplishing redemption for a definite people and not a hypothetical redemption which renders all mankind savable. Proof for this is attested by Scripture, such as, “Blessed be the Lord God of Israel; for he hath visited and redeemed his people” (Luke 1:68). Perhaps a better translation would be:

“Blessed is the Lord God of Israel; for he has visited and accomplished redemption for his people.” (The Greek words *epoiesen lutrōsin* are properly translated “made” or “accomplished redemption”). This account of Luke’s certainly does not teach a hypothetical or potential redemption. It teaches that redemption is an accomplished fact. Luke says: “He has visited and He has

¹⁸ Let those who may automatically reject interpreting *agorazō* in II Peter 2:1, as emphasizing the creative power of the sovereign Lord, make an objective study of how Peter uses Deut. 32:6 and determine why he alludes to it in this particular verse.

accomplished redemption for his people.” Furthermore, can there be anything in God’s plan that is hypothetical? Certainly not! His plan is and must be all inclusive, otherwise God would cease to be God, would He not? But His plan is all inclusive, for He works “all things after the counsel of his own will” (Eph. 1:11) and “known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world” (Acts 15:18). And who can dispute that it is “as many as were ordained to eternal life” who believe (Acts 13:48)?

Finally, it needs to be reiterated that the distinction between the Greek redemptive words and the all-inclusiveness of God’s plan does not allow for universal redemption even in a hypothetical sense, such as is claimed by the universal redemptionist for “Lord” (*agorazō*) in II Peter 2:1. It is concluded, therefore, that II Peter 2:1 does not teach a redemption for all mankind without exception, and that John Owen, the Puritan, was right when he declared, “‘universal,’ and ‘redemption,’ where the greatest part of men perish, are as irreconcilable as ‘Roman’ and ‘Catholic’.”¹⁹

¹⁹ Owen, *The Death of Death in the Death of Christ*, p. 149.