

“Ransomed and Substituted”
Pastor Wally Contreras
May 8, 2022

“And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Behold, I have taken the Levites from among the people of Israel instead of every firstborn who opens the womb among the people of Israel. The Levites shall be mine, for all the firstborn are mine. On the day that I struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, I consecrated for my own all the firstborn in Israel, both of man and of beast. They shall be mine: I am the LORD.” And the LORD spoke to Moses in the wilderness of Sinai, saying, ‘List the sons of Levi, by fathers’ houses and by clans; every male from a month old and upward you shall list.’ So Moses listed them according to the word of the LORD, as he was commanded.” Numbers 3:11-16)

“All those listed among the Levites, whom Moses and Aaron listed at the commandment of the LORD, by clans, all the males from a month old and upward, were 22,000. And the LORD said to Moses, “List all the firstborn males of the people of Israel, from a month old and upward, taking the number of their names. And you shall take the Levites for me—I am the LORD—instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the cattle of the people of Israel.” So Moses listed all the firstborn among the people of Israel, as the LORD commanded him. And all the firstborn males, according to the number of names, from a month old and upward as listed were 22,273. And the LORD spoke to Moses, saying, “Take the Levites instead of all the firstborn among the people of Israel, and the cattle of the Levites instead of their cattle. The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. And as the redemption price for the 273 of the firstborn of the people of Israel, over and above the number of the male Levites, you shall take five shekels per head; you shall take them according to the shekel of the sanctuary (the shekel of twenty gerahs), and give the money to Aaron and his sons as the redemption price for those who are over.” So Moses took the redemption money from those who were over and above those redeemed by the Levites. From the firstborn of the people of Israel he took the money, 1,365 shekels, by the shekel of the sanctuary. And Moses gave the redemption money to Aaron and his sons, according to the word of the LORD, as the LORD commanded Moses. (Numbers 3:39-51)

* * * * *

In these passages of Scripture, I read “I am the LORD” (Yahweh, or Jehovah - “I AM”) three times. He spoke these words when He declared:

They [the Levites/firstborn] shall be mine: I am the LORD (v.11-13)
And you shall take the Levites for me—I am the LORD (v.41)
The Levites shall be mine: I am the LORD. (v.45)

Any thoughts as to why God may have felt the need to clarify His position on the Levites to Moses and the children of Israel? Does the statement “I am the LORD” just tell me who is making the claim or does it tell me more, like why the claim is being made or possibly how the claim will be accomplished? Explain.

When discussing God's redemption (ransom), Pastor Wally went to Exodus 6:6 ("Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment.'" – there's that declaration again "I am the LORD"). I read in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20: "Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, whom you have from God? You are not your own, for you were bought with a price. So glorify God in your body." Spurgeon made this point in a sermon preached on August 22, 1880: "You are today to dedicate yourself wholly and entirely to the Lord, because you are not partly redeemed, but wholly redeemed. Do you make any provision for the flesh, dear friend? Do you keep back any faculty you possess from Christ? Is not this a robbery of your Lord? How do I respond to Spurgeon's question "Is not this a robbery of your Lord?" to not completely dedicate myself to the Lord and why?

Isaiah 52:3-4 tells me: "For thus says the LORD: 'You were sold for nothing, and you shall be redeemed without money.' For thus says the Lord GOD: "My people went down at the first into Egypt to sojourn there, and the Assyrian oppressed them for nothing." 1 Peter 1:18-19 tells me that "knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot." Pastor Wally pointed out that the children of Israel had not been kidnapped by Egypt, but rather they were stolen and not stolen by the Egyptian Pharaoh, but rather stolen by Satan. Are connecting the dots between books of the Old Testament and passages on redemption found in both the Old Testament and in the New Testament just a bit of "nice-to-know" interesting information or do these connections actually impact my life in some way? Explain.

In what way(s) has my understanding of the word "ransomed" (redeemed) been improved or confused? Explain.

Discuss Pastor Wally's statement that fear drives irrational (sinful) behavior.

Pastor Wally said that people shouldn't neglect the call to repent and believe in Jesus. Hebrews 2:1 reminds me that we: "...must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it." This passage doesn't say "pay attention" but rather "pay much closer attention". When I listen to a message being preached, am I really paying attention? If not, why not? If I am paying attention, what would it require for me to "pay much closer attention" to the message?

Pastor Wally said that I need to have confidence in my redemption. Hebrews 9:11-12 tells me that "...when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come, then through the greater and more perfect tent (not made with hands, that is, not of this creation) he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an eternal redemption." Commenting on 1 Peter 1:18-19 ("You were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot."), John Piper explains that: "[t]he point here, in regard to the new birth, is that new eternal life is not possible for enslaved sinners without a ransom being paid. This text implies that we were all in bondage or captivity to ways of thinking and feeling and acting that would have destroyed us. We were under the wrath of God who had handed us over to these futile ways (Rom. 1:21, 24, 26, 28). Slavery to these sinful ways would destroy us if we could not be ransomed from this slavery. God paid this ransom price by sending Christ to bear his own wrath (Rom. 8:3; Gal. 3:13). The Son of Man came "to give his life a ransom for many." This had to happen as the basis of the free and gracious gift of the new birth for undeserving sinners like us. **And since the new birth is the gift of eternal life, not just new life, the ransom price had to be imperishable**—not like silver or gold. The blood of Christ is infinitely valuable and, therefore, can never lose its ransoming power. The life it obtains lasts forever. So, the way God brings about the new birth is by paying a ransom for the eternal life it imparts." Do I, at times, lose sight of the eternal aspects of my redemption and become focused on the here-and-now?

Psalm 49:7-9 says: "Truly no man can ransom another, or give to God the price of his life, for the ransom of their life is costly and can never suffice, that he should live on forever and never see the pit." Psalm 49 ends reminding us: "Be not afraid when a man becomes rich, when the glory of his house increases. For when he dies, he will carry nothing away; his glory will not go down after him. For though, while he lives, he counts himself blessed—and though you get praise when you do well for yourself—his soul will go to the generation of his fathers, who will never again see light. Man in his pomp yet without understanding is like the beasts that perish. (vv. 16-20)" Does all of this information regarding redemption and substitution help me when it comes to my "Who's Your One"? If so, how so? If not, why not?

Titus 2:14 tells me that Jesus, "who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works." Webster's 1828 dictionary defines "zealous" to mean: "Warmly engaged or ardent in the pursuit of an object." Would Jesus describe me as being "zealous for good works"? If so, why? If not, why not?