

# END-TIMES ISSUES



**#76** Commandment #4 – God *redeems* his people.

GOD DOESN'T TELL US TO KNOW ALL THE END-TIME DETAILS. HE TELLS US TO BE READY.

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**There is NO EVIDENCE of a "Sabbath" concept in any other nation in ancient history. It is unique to Israel.**

- Humans originally knew that God had declared the seventh day as **special**. But in a world of sin and rebellion, people quickly (and deliberately) forget facts related to the true God.
  - ✓ So God had to re-introduce this fact to Israel.
  - ✓ We do not know if there were God-fearing *individuals* who still treated the day as special... but there were certainly no *nations* willing to do so.
- Regardless of what *Israel* might have already known about the Sabbath, they couldn't *experience* it while they were slaves in Egypt.
  - ✓ As slaves, they knew no rest. When God redeemed them from Egypt, he would offer them a rest that they had *never before experienced*.
  - ✓ Yet the Israelites had rebellious spirits. *Even before leaving Egypt*, they rebelled against the God who promised to grant them the rest they so desired! *And they would continue to rebel.*

- While they were still in Egypt... they refused to get rid of their idols.

[I] made Myself known to them in the land of Egypt. ...And I said to them: 'Each of **you must throw away the abominations** before his eyes, and **you must not defile yourselves** with the idols of Egypt. I am the LORD your God.'

**But they rebelled against Me and refused to listen.**

None of them cast away the abominations before their eyes, and they did not forsake the idols of Egypt.

Ezekiel 20:5b, 7-8 (BSB)

- Even before they crossed the Red Sea... they had concluded that God could not be trusted to keep his promise, and the Egyptian taskmasters were a better choice!

"What have you done to us by bringing us out of Egypt? **Didn't we say** to you in Egypt, 'Leave us alone; **let us serve the Egyptians**?' It would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the desert!"

Exodus 14:11b-12 (NIV)

★ **Nevertheless ... God can be trusted.**

- He is trustworthy. And therefore, he keeps his promises.  
(It's *people* who can't be trusted. It's *people* who aren't trustworthy. It's *people* who don't keep their promises.)

★ **Therefore ... God kept his promise.**

- He *still brought them out* of Egypt.
  - ↳ We looked at this "bringing out" concept last time.
- He *still redeemed them* from the land of physical and spiritual slavery.
  - ↳ **This "redeeming" is today's focus.**

In Old Testament Hebrew, there are *three* main concepts that focus on "redeeming." *Two* are used in the context of Israel being brought out of Egypt.

**"Redeem" Word #1:**

לָקַח (gā·'āl): Strong's #1350\* – to deliver, redeem, buy back.  
[לֹקֵחַ (gō·'ēl): Strong's #1352 – the person who does it.]

**This word has an emphasis on the duty of family.**  
(This included the *extended* family – clan or tribe.)

- In Israel, it was important to maintain and support the family name, family line, and family property (which could not be permanently sold, because it was on loan from God – Leviticus 25:23). It was also important to maintain justice.
- God used this concept to describe his relationship to Israel.
  - ✓ In many passages, we can see aspects of this "family" focus. But in some of the prophets, the word may be used in a more general way (the "family" concept not *ignored*, but just not the focus).

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\* (Strong's Concordance numbers are given for those who want to look for other Scripture passages that use these words.)

**Family responsibilities within this context – PART 1.**

- **Redeem (buy back)** land that was sold due to poverty.
- **Ransom** relatives who had sold themselves into slavery to pay debts.
- **Marry** the widow of a deceased kinsman, in order to continue their family line. An example of this is found in the book of Ruth.

↳ **When these things were the focus, the individual doing it was called the "kinsman redeemer."**

One more aspect of this person's role went under a different name.

Regarding debts, property and relatives sold into slavery, there were also other regulations, such as the year of Jubilee, when Hebrew slaves and property would be restored, debts cancelled, etc.

### Family responsibilities within this context – PART 2.

- Pursue justice against those who had killed a family member.

↳ When this was the focus, the individual doing it was called the "avenger of blood."

There were also "cities of refuge," for people who *accidentally* killed another person. The avenger of blood would not be allowed to kill them.

### God used this concept to describe his relationship to Israel.

- This is the very first "redemption" word God used, when he told Israel about his plan to bring them out of Egypt. He would be treating them as family.

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### THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S REDEMPTION: WHAT HE WOULD DO FOR ISRAEL!

The concept we mentioned last time: where they're coming from.

"Therefore tell the Israelites: 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians and deliver you from their bondage.'

★ God will rescue his family.

I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with mighty acts of judgment.

I will take you as My own people, and I will be your God.

The concept we mentioned last time.

Then you will know that I am the LORD your God, who brought you out from under the yoke of the Egyptians. And I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. I will give it to you as a possession.

Different Hebrew word, emphasizes where they're going to.

I am the LORD! "

Exodus 6:6-8 (BSB)

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### How is this word used in Scripture?

- In the **five books of Moses**, this word is mainly used for describing the duties of *human* redeemers (kinsman redeemer or blood avenger).
- In the **Psalms**, there is a greater focus on *God* as the redeemer. This emphasis is also very common in the book of **Isaiah**. We see an increased emphasis on the *spiritual* aspect of God's redemption of his people (though *physical* redemption isn't ignored).

- Though most of these passages are directed toward Israel, some of those that emphasize the *spiritual* aspect of God redeeming people may have relevance (or application) to Gentile Christians in the New Testament era. (Passages that *don't* have a direct application can still teach us, since God often uses *physical* things to teach principles about *spiritual* things.)

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### What happens when Pharaoh mistreats God's family?

- God told Moses, *in advance*, what would happen. After all the plagues Egypt would experience, Pharaoh would *still* refuse to let Israel go.
- Note the emphasis on *family*. God, as Israel's "gō·'āl" (Hebrew for "kinsman redeemer / avenger of blood"), would accomplish justice.

"Then tell Pharaoh that this is what the LORD says: 'Israel is My firstborn son, and I told you to let My son go so that he may worship Me. But since you have refused to let him go, behold, I will kill your firstborn son!'

Exodus 4:22-23 (BSB)

There is more involved in this. God spared Israel's firstborn sons (and firstborn male *animals*), because the people trusted God and obeyed his instructions related to the Passover (see Exodus 12+).

Because God spared the firstborn, they belonged to him. It would be an ongoing requirement for the Israelites to "buy" them back from God. [See Exodus 13:11-16. (It uses the *other* "redeem" word (described later).)]

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### After God led Israel across the Red Sea...

- Moses (and Israel) sang a song of praise to the LORD. In it, they acknowledged God's work in "redeeming" the people.

In your unfailing love you will lead the people you have redeemed.  
In your strength you will guide them to your holy dwelling.

Exodus 15:13 (NIV)

INITIALLY: IT'S THE PROMISED LAND AND JERUSALEM;  
IN THE FUTURE: IT'S THE "NEW JERUSALEM"!

- They also acknowledged that they were *his* people (v.16), and they described how God would lead them into the land he promised to them.  
↳ God kept his promise and did *all* of this. But the people quickly forgot God's goodness and quickly rebelled... and it would be 40 years before God's promise would be fulfilled. These people would die in the wilderness, and only their children would enter the land.

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### Shifting to a greater focus on the spiritual aspect of being redeemed.

- In **Moses' day** (and a few centuries after that), the greater emphasis was on the *physical* aspects of the word:
  - ✓ The role of the kinsman redeemer, etc. – Leviticus. [An example of someone being a kinsman redeemer – Ruth.] Also, redeeming various things related to the sacrifices.
  - ✓ The role of the blood avenger (the judgment aspect of this role); cities of refuge (for when a person *accidentally* killed someone) – Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua.
- The **Psalms** and **Isaiah** have an increased focus on *God* as the redeemer, sometimes emphasizing the *spiritual* aspect (which does not necessarily downplay the *physical* aspect).
- **Isaiah** also mentions what appears to be a *prophetic* redeeming by God, bringing Israel *back* into the land, after being scattered throughout the nations.

Some examples from the Psalms and Isaiah: →

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### A greater spiritual and/or future emphasis.

May the words of my mouth  
and the meditation of my heart  
be pleasing in Your sight,  
O LORD, my Rock and my **Redeemer**.

Psalms 19:14 (BSB)

And there will be a highway  
called the Way of Holiness.  
... the **redeemed** will walk upon it.

Isaiah 35:8a, 9b (BSB)

(Though not the focus, *physical*  
redemption may also be included.)

"The **Redeemer** will come to Zion,  
to those in Jacob who turn from transgression,"  
declares the LORD.

Isaiah 59:20 (BSB); Paul refers to this passage in Romans  
11:26-27 (about the New Covenant).

[The LORD] ... who **redeems** your life from the Pit  
and crowns you with loving devotion and compassion, ...

Psalms 103:4 (BSB)

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### The Bible's "family" emphasis extends *beyond* the use of this word.

- Since a "family relationship" has been established between Israel and God, there are *many* Scripture passages that use "family" terminology to describe the relationship between God and Israel.
  - These verses often (not always) *contrast* God's goodness and Israel's wickedness.

"When Israel was a child, I loved him,  
and out of Egypt I called **my son**."

Hosea 11:1 (NIV)

For your **husband** is your Maker—  
the LORD of Hosts is His name—  
the Holy One of Israel is your **Redeemer**;  
He is called the God of all the earth.

Isaiah 54:5 (BSB)

- This concept carries over into the New Testament, where we are called "*children of God*" (1 John 3:1-3), who have been *adopted* into God's family (Ephesians 1:5... *as Israel was*, Romans 9:4).

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### "Redeem" Word #2:

קָדַם (pā-dā(h)): Strong's #6299 – to redeem, ransom.

This word emphasizes the *redeeming* aspect.  
In human relationships, it often implies a *payment* being made.

- This may involve purchasing or buying what is being "redeemed"; but at other times, the focus is mainly on the "redeeming" – the *freeing* or *liberating* of someone/something.
- In reference to God, there appears to be little or no focus on the "buying" aspect, but great emphasis on the *deliverance from bondage* – various kinds of *physical* bondage, *spiritual* bondage, etc.
  - Could this "silence" be because God already owns everything? Even so, *there was still effort exerted* in bringing Israel out.

... by trials, signs, wonders, and war, by a strong hand and  
an outstretched arm, and by great terrors—as the LORD  
your God did for you in Egypt,...

Deuteronomy 4:34b (BSB)

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### THE GREATNESS OF GOD'S REDEMPTION: THE LOVE HE OFFERS TO ISRAEL!

God **brought them out**.

★ He **rescued them with great power**.

Do you want to  
experience his **love**?

OR: Would you  
rather **hate him**,  
and reap the  
consequences?

Your conduct will  
demonstrate your  
choice!

But because the LORD loved you and kept the  
oath He swore to your fathers, He brought you  
out with a mighty hand and redeemed you from  
the house of slavery, from the hand of Pharaoh  
king of Egypt.

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God,  
the faithful God who keeps His covenant of loving  
devotion for a thousand generations of **those  
who love Him** and keep His commandments.

But **those who hate Him** He repays to their faces  
with destruction; He will not hesitate to repay to  
his face the one who hates Him.

So keep the commandments and statutes and  
ordinances that I am giving you to follow this day.

Deuteronomy 7:8-11 (BSB)

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### How is this word used in Scripture?

#### The "redeeming" of the firstborn – Exodus 12:1-13:16.

- The books of Moses contain various regulations in which a person or thing could be redeemed, often involving a *payment* of some sort. The most significant of these is the redemption of all firstborn males, whether human or animal.
- Human firstborn males were to be redeemed with payment. Animal firstborn males were to be either redeemed, or sacrificed/killed (the options depending on the type of animal).
- This requirement is directly linked to the first Passover, when the firstborn of Egypt were all killed, but the firstborn of Israel were *not* killed. (The Israelites had followed God's instructions to put the Passover lamb's blood on the doorposts, so the "angel of death" did not enter – see Exodus 12:1-13:16.)

- Scripture has much to say about the Passover and the firstborn. Later, we will make some additional comments about these two concepts.

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### This "redemption" word, as used in other parts of the Old Testament.

- There is a greater emphasis on God's *intervention* (whether past, present or future). It is God who redeems/rescues his people.
  - Sometimes it is a reference to what happened in Egypt.
  - Increasingly, the emphasis is on many situations in which God is said to rescue his people (whether individuals or nations) in what we could call *spiritual* redemption. There are also some *prophetic* references to redemption.

- Some random examples:

Into Your hands I commit my spirit;  
You have **redeemed** me, O LORD, God of truth.

Psalms 31:5 (BSB); quoted by Jesus, in Luke 23:46.

And He will **redeem** Israel  
from all iniquity.

Psalms 130:8 (BSB)

So the **redeemed** of the LORD will return  
and enter Zion with singing,  
crowned with everlasting joy.

Isaiah 35:10 (BSB)

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### More comments about the Passover.

- There is much we can learn about the Passover. But here are two things we want to mention:
  - Israel's cooperation was an expression of obedience and trust in God – even if (for many) the trust was temporary. What they did (i.e., the ritual) showed the connection between the *physical* and *spiritual* aspects of being *redeemed* from Egypt.
    - They needed to *physically* apply the blood to the door frame (etc.); and they were *physically* led out of Egypt.
    - They needed to connect this (in their minds/hearts) to the *spiritual* aspect of being *redeemed/liberated* from Egypt.
  - These things point to Christ's sacrifice and our *eternal* redemption.
    - 1 Corinthians 5:7b – Christ is our Passover lamb.
    - 1 Peter 1:18-19 – redeemed from our old ways with the blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or spot.
    - Matthew 26:28-29; Hebrews 12:24 – Christ's offering of his own shed blood resulted in the new covenant.

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### How ancient is this "firstborn" concept?

God could have initiated it at the beginning, the way he initiated the Sabbath concept. But Scripture doesn't say.

- It seems to have some type of significance all the way back to the earliest humans (Genesis 4:4). It is also mentioned throughout the book of Genesis (often showing how the firstborn *failed* in his obligations).
- It was an important concept in other ancient middle-eastern cultures – which could suggest a common original source.
- But regardless of how it came into existence, God gave it a significance that exists even today – at least in its spiritual expression.
  - The "firstborn" concept involves more than just "birth order" (though it often refers to this). The concept can also be used to indicate an individual's *preeminence* or *authority*.
  - Though some New Testament passages have this physical birth-order focus, *most* passages use the word in "non-birth-order" ways.

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### The "firstborn" concept in the New Testament.

(In most cases, *physical* birth-order is not the issue.)

- Some passages focus on physical birth order.
  - Jesus was Mary's firstborn – Luke 2:7.
  - A reference to the firstborn of Egypt and Israel (referring to the Exodus account) – Hebrews 11:28.
- Most passages focus on one's preeminence or authority (not birth order).
  - Jesus and his relationship to the Father (not physical) – Hebrews 1:6; and his pre-eminence over creation – Colossians 1:15.
  - Jesus and his authority/pre-eminence even over the dead (because of the resurrection) – Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5.
  - Jesus and his pre-eminence over the church – Romans 8:29.
  - All Christians (or all the saved from all times) as having a place in God's kingdom (= names registered in heaven) – Hebrews 12:23.

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### ★ DID GOD PAY ANYTHING WHEN HE REDEEMED PEOPLE? ★

(This "redemption" word is sometimes associated with payment.)

- People obviously paid. When Israel left Egypt, the Egyptians paid with the lives of their firstborn, and sacrificial lambs paid for Israel's firstborn. God also told Israel that *future* firstborn males belonged to him; and they would have to *redeem* them (payment or death, depending on what it was).
- There is no passage that links God's "redemption" to a payment.
  - But the *Old* Testament is not the end of the story. When we get to the *New* Testament (which has its own "redemption" words, in N.T. Greek), we find *many* passages that mention payment. And many of them link it to the *redemption* concept – a *spiritual* redemption!
    - We were *redeemed* with the blood of Christ – 1 Peter 1:18-19.
    - Redemption through his blood – Ephesians 1:7.
    - God *bought* us with his own blood – Acts 20:28.
    - Jesus died, to deliver us from this present evil age – Galatians 1:4.

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### "Redeem" Word #3:

גָּפַר (kā-pār): Strong's #3722 – to atone, pay for.

כִּפַּר (kip-pū-rim): Strong's #3725 – atonement.

A "redemption" word that is reserved for the concept of "atonement."

- This concept is *never* used in reference to Israel being redeemed out of Egypt. It is related exclusively to the *spiritual* aspect of redemption – specifically:
 

**How can a person be made righteous before God?**
- In the Old Testament era, God provided a sacrificial system, whereby sins could be "covered-over" with animal blood. By this, God's righteous wrath would be *temporarily* appeased. It also showed the seriousness of sin, and pointed to the final solution for the problem of sin: the sacrifice and resurrection of Jesus Christ, through whom, *full* and *final* payment for sin could be made.

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### A short overview.

- In the books of Moses, various sacrifices and offerings were provided. There was also a special ceremony, called the "Day of Atonement" (Yom Kippur).
- Ezekiel makes several statements about these sacrifices and offerings. But in general, the psalms and prophets have a greater focus on forgiveness (or *not* being forgiven), rather than on the ceremonial activity.
- Ceremonies could temporarily "cover" sins; but they could not permanently "take away" sins. The **New Testament** focuses on how Christ fulfilled all that these ceremonial rituals could *not* accomplish, but could only point to.

It is **impossible** for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

Hebrews 10:4 (NIV)

God presented Christ as a **sacrifice of atonement**, through the shedding of his blood...

Romans 3:25a (NIV)

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- The bigger issue in the New Testament is **reconciliation**. Because Jesus *did* completely atone for our sins – he paid the price in full – the barrier between us and God has been taken down!

For if, when we were enemies of God, we were **reconciled to Him** through the death of His Son, how much more, having been **reconciled**, shall we be saved through His life!

Ro 5:10 (BSB)

Once you were alienated from God and were hostile in your minds, engaging in evil deeds.

But now He has **reconciled** you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy, unblemished, and blameless in His presence—if indeed you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope of the gospel you heard, which has been proclaimed to every creature under heaven, and of which I, Paul, have become a servant.

Colossians 1:21-23 (BSB)

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### ★ WHAT CAN WE CONCLUDE? ★

- There is a lot more to Israel leaving Egypt, than just the **relocating** of people! This journey was intended to include a *rejection of the values* of Egypt!
- The greater emphasis is on the fact that this relocating was an *act of redemption* – not just *physical*, but also *spiritual*.

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- **Bringing out and redeeming: *Both* have a spiritual emphasis!**
  - ✓ **Israel knew this!** They knew *all* that they needed, in order to make a right response – including the need for a *changed* heart.
  - ✓ **The prophets explained it further**, and increased the focus on the *spiritual* aspect. They also promised the coming of the New Covenant.
  - ✓ **The New Testament gives us the fullest revelation** on these matters, and shows us how it was all made possible: through Jesus' death and resurrection.

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**OUR REDEMPTION AND "BRINGING OUT" OF THE WORLD IS ONE OF THE REASONS\* GOD GAVE US FOR DEDICATING PART OF EACH WEEK TO: ① A FOCUS ON GOD, AND ② REST FROM OTHER ACTIVITIES!**

- ⚡ ① We need God, and ② we need to *do whatever is necessary* to meet that need... **OR WE WON'T SURVIVE!**

- ⚡ *This is the principle that is introduced in the Fourth Commandment, and is explained further, throughout the rest of Scripture, through various commands, instructions and examples.*

... **the LORD your God brought you out** [= an act that is linked to "*redemption*"...]... **That is why the LORD your God has commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.**

Deuteronomy 5:15b (BSB)

\* The other reason: What God did in Genesis 2:1-3. (We've looked at this in the past.)

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### ◆ Our Mission ◆

**God can be trusted; and God keeps his promises.**

↓  
THEREFORE...

⇒ **REJOICE** in the redemption that God offers us!

⇒ **RESPOND** the right way!

It takes time and effort to focus on God.  
But God has turned it into a *blessing* that benefits us *forever* – and provides *rest* even now.

God has revealed more about this issue to *us* than to *Israel*.  
If we fail to respond the right way, our guilt (and judgment) will be greater than theirs.

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### ◆ CAUTION!! ◆

⇒ **BE AWARE: The devil *always* tries to corrupt the truth.**

◁ If he can't get you to **stop** taking time to focus on God, he'll try to get you to **distort** the purpose for doing so! ▷



**Do you devote weekly time and energy to God...**

Because you *need him*?

Or because you *want to earn his favor*?



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