

# The Eternal Redemption

BROADCAST AUGUST 12, 1962

TEXT—"*. . . by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*"—Hebrews 9:12

A plane crashed in the mountains overlooking the city of San Jose, Costa Rica. All of its passengers were killed. In their memory, friends erected a cross on the scene of the crash. As you stand in the city and look toward the mountain, the cross is visible only when it is seen against a background of clouds. Costa Ricans point to this fact saying, "When it is cloudy there is always the cross."

What a blessed thought for days like these! "When it is cloudy there is always the cross." Storm clouds lower about us on every hand. International intrigue, social unrest, economic uncertainty, crime, corruption, seething sin on every hand, are but some of the black clouds which shut out the sun of hope and security. Here and there the ominous thunder of the drums of war is heard. The zigzag lightning of nations in turmoil splits the sky, reminding us of the constantly threatening rain of death which at any moment could blanket the earth with horror unspeakable.

If this were all of the story, life would be dreary indeed. But there is another chapter to the story, a chapter largely unheard and unread by the masses of the earth. And across its pages we would write, "When it is cloudy there is always the cross."

Yes, the cross towers o'er the wrecks of time. It says that man should not perish but have everlasting life. The cross is God's answer of love to man's message of hate. It is heavenly reason amid hellish confusion. It is divine light in demonic darkness. And from the shores of time it sends its guiding rays to eternity-bound souls in danger of perishing upon the treacherous reefs of sin.

And by its light we read the words of Holy Writ. "*. . . by his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" (Heb. 9:12)

Throughout the United States, along with other public groups, the churches are being asked to use their buildings as shelters in time of any national emergency. This is but one evidence of modern man's primary concern for security. And while our churches are responding to this request, it should be noted that the churches' greatest offer of security is not in their physical plants but in their message. It is the message concerning maximum, eternal security. It is the message of redemption.

Therefore, let us consider this message as we note, first, the human pathos; second, the divine purpose; third, the effectual performance.

"Neither by the blood of goats and calves." These words are suggestive of man's futile efforts at self-redemption.

Go where you will throughout the earth and you will find a common bond between all men: the recognition that the soul of man is estranged from God. It is a universal commentary on Isaiah 59:2. "*But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you, that he will not hear.*"

I have seen it in the blank faces of Africans bowing before their gods of sticks and stones, not knowing that they are only gods so-called (I Cor. 8:5-6). I have observed it in Japan, as before their altars, worshippers clapped their hands to attract the attention of gods who neither hear nor speak. I have discovered it in India, where the faithful bathe in the muddy Ganges, having never heard of the blood that washes whiter than snow. I have witnessed it in Thailand, as hungry eyes gazed upon the Sleeping Buddah, knowing nothing of the God who neither slumbers nor sleeps. It is evident in masses on every continent, where endless multitudes go through endless rituals only to realize no sense of the vital presence of the living God. Yes, I have seen it in many so-called Christian nations, where sin-imprisoned souls endeavor to be free through the work of their hands or by gifts from their wealth. And all the while the Bible says that our God is not one who is "*worshipped with men's hands*" (Acts 17:25). We are "*not redeemed by corruptible things, as silver and gold . . .*" (I Pet. 1:18) It is not of ourselves. It is a gift of God. (Eph. 2:8)

Yes, it is a pathetic picture indeed. Men lost from God. Souls hungry for God, yet failing in their own powers to come to a saving knowledge of God. However you may view the seething

unrest throughout the earth, it is basically a spiritual condition. On the surface it may appear to be social, economic, or political. But underneath all this is the hunger of the soul. Truly Augustine spoke when he said that God has made us for Himself, and our souls are ever restless until they find rest in Him.

The divine purpose is seen in the words "*having obtained eternal redemption for us.*" (Heb. 9:12) Someone has well said, "Underneath all the arches of Bible history, throughout the whole grand temple of the Scriptures, these two voices ever echo—Man is ruined! Man is redeemed!"

Now the redemptive purpose of God is no after-thought with Him. Before He made man, God knew that he would sin. Thus ere He had spoken the universe into being, God willed within Himself to redeem man from his sin.

The question naturally arises that if God knew this why did He make man in the first place? The answer is found in the very nature of God. Being a person, God could not have fellowship with His material universe. Thus He made man in His likeness and for His fellowship. But man, to be a person, must be given the right of choice. It must be a willing fellowship entered into by man on the basis of his free-will. Biblical history reveals that man made the wrong choice. Thus sin entered to mar the perfect fellowship willed by God.

But a loving God was not content to leave the fellowship broken. Henceforth, throughout the remainder of the Bible we find God moving in history to effect His redemptive will and purpose.

In so doing God might have chosen any one of several means. He might have employed His physical power, but it would have been an incomplete redemption. You can force a man to

obey you but not to love you. God might have used human sacrifice, as many ancient religions supposed. But man, being sinful himself, could not serve for the atonement of other men of like nature. Furthermore, God might have used animal sacrifice, as He did in the Old Testament ritual. But such involved only the sacrifice of dumb brutes which, in itself, was powerless to elicit a proper response in the soul of man. The author of Hebrews refers to the sacrificial ritual of the Old Testament as the image of good things to come. (10:1)

Therefore, to achieve His purpose, God was faced with a dilemma. His holiness must be satisfied. Since the wages of sin is death, someone must die to bridge the chasm between God and man. But such a victim must himself be not only sinless but soulful. Since none among men was worthy, there remained only for God Himself to be both "*just, and the justifier.*" (Rom. 3:26) God must pay the ransom for sin. And He paid it to Himself!

We have noted that God's redemptive purpose was no after-thought.

God did not simply decide to redeem man after he had sinned. Knowing all things, the eternal God willed in eternity to redeem man in time. Thus the author of Revelation speaks of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world (13:8). This is further seen in Hebrews 10. "*For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body thou hast prepared me . . . Then said I, Lo, I come . . . to do thy will, O God.*" (vv.4-7)

This is the voice of the Second Person of the Triune God. Knowing that nothing less than the life of God Himself could atone for sin, in the Person of His Son, God moved from eternity into time to redeem a sinful human race. The Lamb slain in eternity became in history "*the Lamb of God which taketh away the sin of the world.*" (John 1:29) For "*God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself . . . For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*" (II Cor. 5:19-21) So

## ARKANSAS STATION RECEIVES AWARD



Bill Fogg (left), owner of radio station KXJK, Forrest City, Ark., accepts an award for "distinguished public service" from Sam Gash, pastor of the local First Baptist Church. The award, made possible by the Southern Baptist Radio-TV Commission, was presented to station KXJK for broadcasting "MasterControl"\* regularly each week since August, 1959, as a public service.

*"By his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us." (Heb. 9:12) This is the consummation of the redemptive work of Christ.*

Born of a virgin He was sinless in His nature. Tempted in all things, yet without sin, He was sinless in His character. As *"a Lamb without blemish and without spot"* (I Pet. 1:19) He died on the cross. He died the sinless for the sinful. He died for you and me. As one has said, "He became all that God hates that you might become all that God loves." And in His resurrection from the dead He broke the power of sin that you need nevermore be held in its power.

Now all of this is contained in the words of our text. *"Neither by the blood of goats and calves."* Had there been any other way by which you might be saved, God would not have sent His Son to die on the cross. But because *"without [the] shedding of blood is no remission"* (Heb. 9:22) of sin, God in Christ shed His blood, He poured out His life for you. You may say that you do not like a bloody religion. But God does. And God sets the terms of redemption, not you. God says that *"by his own blood"* Christ made possible your redemption.

In His death Jesus fulfilled every function of the high priest on the Jewish Day of Atonement. He was both priest and sacrifice. The difference being that whereas the high priest repeated his work annually with continual acts of sacrifice, Jesus effected a once-for-all sacrifice. Three times in Hebrews the word "once-for-all" (7:27; 9:12; 10:10, literal translation) expresses the nature of Jesus' sacrifice. There was one once-for-all sacrifice, and there never need be any other.

Furthermore, having paid the price

for your redemption *"by his own blood he entered in once [once-for-all] into the holy place"* *"now to appear in the presence of God for us."* (Heb. 9:12,24) Right now before the face of God is the evidence of His sacrifice, evidence that Jesus paid the price for your sins. And He entered in *"by his own blood."* There was never a moment during His sojourn on earth that Jesus could not have returned to the Father. But had He done so short of the cross, He would have returned alone. He would still have been God but not Saviour. But because He entered God's presence *"by his own blood"* He opens the way for you and all others who will believe on Him.

When Jesus on the cross cried, "It is finished," he was saying to His Father, "Mission accomplished!" Henceforth, your redemption depends upon you. *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life."* (John 3:16)

So in these days of the lowering clouds of darkness and gloom hear once again the words, "When it is cloudy there is always the cross." And in that cross is your hope and mine.

*When I survey the wondrous cross,  
On which the Prince of glory died,  
My richest gain I count but loss,  
And pour contempt on all my pride.*

*See, from His head, His hands, His feet,*

*Sorrow and love flow mingled down;  
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,  
Or thorns compose so rich a crown.*

*Were the whole realm of nature mine,  
That were a present far too small;  
Love so amazing, so divine,  
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

—ISAAC WATTS ●