

Pictures of Salvation

Pictures of Salvation

by Brian Johnston

1. The slave market

Slavery was an accepted way of life in the Roman Empire. So much so that perhaps we could call it an institution in those days. Probably at least a quarter of all people in the empire were slaves. When the apostle Paul was writing his Bible letters, it is estimated that there were something like 20 million slaves just in Italy alone.

Most slaves were domestic helps. The household was made up of husband and wife, their children, and slaves, and was the most important social unit in the Roman Empire. Slaves were involved at every level of life in the household: they took care of finances; prepared the food; dressed the householder and his family; nursed the family when sick; guarded the estate and the family; read poetry; reminded the master of people's names; provided background music at dinner; served as messengers and doorkeepers; and the women were sometimes concubines.

What could be more natural, therefore, than for the apostle Paul to relate the Christian message of salvation to this very common practice and way of life? At that time, people understood the idea of slavery only too well, and a slave would normally dream of obtaining his or her freedom. It's hardly surprising then, that in presenting the Christian message 2,000 years ago, the apostle Paul used the emotive imagery of freedom from slavery. One place where this picture of salvation is clearly used is found in Romans chapter 6, where Paul says:

... thanks be to God that, though you used to be slaves to sin, you wholeheartedly obeyed the form of teaching to which you were entrusted. You have been set free from sin ... (vv.17,18 NIV)

We're all used to the appealing images used by advertisers in selling their product. Rarely, if ever, does the product deliver on the glamorous image that's implied. But with the Christian message it's exactly the opposite! No single human idea or analogy can do it justice! That's why, in this booklet, we'll be looking at the four main pictures Paul used at the Holy Spirit's direction to communicate what it means to experience the spiritual salvation Christianity offers. The picture of human slaves to sin being set free is just one of them - but it's an important one and it's good if we have a bit more background so that we can appreciate it better.

Back in the days of the Roman Empire, people became slaves for a number of reasons. Prisoners of war became slaves. Others were kidnapped and sold into slavery - sometimes as a result of piracy. Another source of slaves was purchase from over the boundaries of the empire. Roman soldiers involved in frontier wars and rebellions had many opportunities to buy prisoners of war as slaves at auctions. But people often became slaves simply because of poverty. Someone who could not pay his debts could be forced into slavery until the debt was paid in service. When a person was no longer able to obtain food and shelter, that person might make a contract to become a slave. Similarly, if a baby wasn't able to be cared for, it could be made the property of a slave owner. Individuals who were part of the slave trade either collected abandoned babies for later sale themselves or bought them from others who found them. The children of slaves also became the possession of the Master. Slavery could also be brought about by conviction in law - as a punishment for a serious crime.

In summary, it's been said that 'slaves were either born or made.' If we pursue the Bible's analogy with slavery as regards our spiritual condition, then we're made to realize that we are 'sinners by nature and by practice'. We inherit a sinful nature from our parents that's traceable all the way back to the disobedience of the first man, Adam. We're all tainted by the original sin (Romans 5:12). This is our in-born tendency to choose to go our own way. As a result we're all sinners by practice, and sin spoils our lives: *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*, the Bible says (Romans 3:23). And, as Jesus himself said in John 8:34: *"everyone who sins is a slave to sin"*. This is the spiritual slavery that extends to everyone on the planet.

Sin in our lives can show itself to be a harsh master, as when it leads to the destruction of health or the wreck of family life. The life of a Roman slave at times reflected this. While some slaves might have had a better life than that of poor people who were free, others were confined to the private prison attached to most Roman farms. There the slaves were made to work in chains as they cultivated the fields. The prison appears to have been usually underground, lit by narrow windows. The windows were too high from the ground to be touched by the hand. Slaves who had displeased their masters were punished by imprisonment here. It was where all slaves who could not be depended on were housed. It all reminds me of what Paul had to say in Galatians 3:22 that *the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ,*

might be given to those who believe. (NIV)

But, in Roman society a slave could buy freedom or someone else could pay a sum of money to obtain a slave's freedom. Freedom was sometimes given as a reward for loyalty. In one case, a woman was set free because she bore four sons who became the master's slaves. Once freedom was attained, the freed person could not be reclaimed as a slave. Sometimes a slave could actually be adopted by the master and inherit equally with the natural sons.

This brings us to the good news of Christianity: that all of us who are spiritual slaves to sin can be made free through Jesus Christ. He is the one *in whom we have redemption* (Ephesians 1:7). The word 'redemption' (Greek: 'apolutrosis') means 'to redeem someone by paying the price for them ... liberation ... by payment of a ransom' (Thayer).

The story of redemption in the New Testament of the Bible can be told in three of its original words. The first ('agorazo': 1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23,30; 2 Peter 2:1; Revelation 5:9) means 'to buy in the slave market'. The way it's applied in the Bible makes the wonderful story of Christianity very clear - that the Lord Jesus came to this earth as man so that he might buy us in the slave market of sin. This slave market represents the degrading situation into which human disobedience had brought us. The second word for redemption (Greek: 'exagorazo'), a word meaning 'to buy out of the slave market', emphasizes that the Christian believer now belongs to the Lord Jesus Christ, since it was he who bought us at a price for himself (1 Corinthians 6:19-20):

Do you not know, Paul asks the Corinthian Christians, that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; you were bought at a price. Therefore honour God with your body. (NIV)

The redeemed believer on the Lord Jesus is his possession for ever, never again to be put up for sale. The idea of a price having been paid brings us to the third word for redemption (Greek: 'lutroo'), which means 'to liberate by payment of a ransom'. All who repent and believe on Jesus Christ are set free from the guilt and penalty of their sins. This redemption, this forgiveness of sins, is 'through his blood' - for the ransom price paid for sinners was the death of Jesus, the Son of God, when he was crucified outside Jerusalem two thousand years ago in God's plan of salvation: his plan to liberate spiritually all who believe. Let's read more about that tremendous plan from Ephesians 1:5-7:

[God] predestined us to be adopted as his sons through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will - to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace. (NIV)

Our concluding thought concerns the fact that believers on the Lord Jesus now have an obligation to live for him. He is the one who has bought them out of the slave market of sin. This is how Paul puts it in writing to his Christian friends in Rome:

You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness ...

But now that you have been set free from sin and have become slaves to God, the benefit you reap leads to holiness, and the result is eternal life. For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:18-23 NIV)

2. The law courts

In the previous chapter we were thinking about how slavery was an everyday fact of life, and how the apostle Paul, directed by the Holy Spirit, drew upon this background in one of the main pictures of salvation he used: that of being set free from sin's spiritual slavery. It's a different kind of freedom we want to explore now. Not so much ethical, but legal. We now turn our searchlight on another favourite source of illustration for Paul. In doing so, we make our way from the slave-market to the law courts. Paul was certainly aware of his legal rights as a Roman citizen. Once, he escaped a flogging because he asserted those rights. Paul had an incisive mind, and in his own defence at times he went head-to-head with the best advocates of the day (for example in Acts 24)!

Perhaps after its armies, the Roman legal system was the greatest strength of the Roman Empire. The rights of citizens were firmly upheld in the courts. Then, as today, cases in court were decided by argument between lawyers, and judgements by elected magistrates were based on earlier decisions. Roman law has had a significant influence on legal systems down to the present day - certainly in Europe.

Sometimes when sharing the Christian message, Paul seems to use legal language and forensic terms, his reasoning no doubt reflecting the legal processes of the time. It's worth looking at this, because we believe the Holy Spirit was directing Paul in his choice of the language and terms we find in the Bible.

When writing to his Christian friends at the very heart of the empire in Rome, Paul argues that all - both Gentile (non-Jew) and Jew - have sinned. As we read through to the end of the third chapter of his letter to the Romans, it's as if the death sentence has already been passed (for such are the wages of sin) and we, the prisoners, are helplessly awaiting the inevitable on death row.

There's a mounting sense of dread suspense as if the footsteps of the executioner are getting nearer and nearer to the cell on death row where the prisoner is housed. As we read verses from these chapters, one after another, think of them as footsteps drawing nearer to a convicted prisoner:

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness
(Romans 1:18)

God gave them over to a depraved mind, to do those things which are not proper (Romans 1:28)

Therefore you have no excuse (Romans 2:1)

The judgment of God rightly falls upon those who practice such things.
(Romans 2:2)

But because of your stubbornness and unrepentant heart you are storing up wrath for yourself in the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God, who will render to each person according to his deeds.
(Romans 2:5,6)

All these verses fall like heavy footsteps, sounding louder and louder ...

... as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one. (Romans 3:10)

All have turned aside ... there none who does good (Romans 3:12)

... because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight; for through the Law comes the knowledge of sin. (Romans 3:20)

For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God ... (Romans 3:23)

These verses fall upon our ears like the unrelenting footsteps of the executioner as he draws ever nearer to our condemned cell. Condemned, convicted, and broken by the realization that all this is true, we sit and await the inevitable. It's as if we hear the hand of the executioner begin to turn the door handle ...

Then suddenly at verse 24 of the third chapter, it's as if the cell door is suddenly flung open and we read: *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus.*

Try to visualize it with me. It's as though light suddenly and unexpectedly pours into our cell. In a dramatic pronouncement we're declared free to go. "Free! Made free, and not simply forgiven, but reckoned 'Not guilty!'" Who could blame us for standing there blinking with surprise?

This is no jail-break. There's no miscarriage of justice involved. Justice has been satisfied because of the work of Christ! Paul continues by explaining that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, hung and died on the cross two thousand years ago *for the demonstration ... of [God's] righteousness ... so that [God] would be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.* (Romans 3:26)

It's precisely this language of justification that's taken from the legal system. It's the declaring of someone as righteous (or just). The word is a forensic

one, and one that's not used in Greek literature for making righteous. Instead, it is used for the reckoning of righteousness. It consists of the non-reckoning of sins.

Romans chapter 4 is a good place to see that. In the language of one Bible version we read there:

"Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Now to the one who works, his wage is not credited as a favor, but as what is due. But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness, just as David also speaks of the blessing on the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

"... Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will not take into account."

(Romans 4:3-8)

We know what it means to receive a credit (payment) on some statement of account. In a different context we may even have experienced getting credit for something we haven't done, perhaps credit we don't deserve. But isn't it amazing to think that, knowingly, God is prepared to credit us with something we don't deserve - to credit that we haven't earned! On the evidence of our faith alone (just as it was with Abraham) God will credit us with righteousness, meaning our sins will not be reckoned against us. Suddenly our guilt, our debt, the debit balance of our account with God, is transformed into credit. It's pure grace, activated on our part by personal faith, as verse 16 of Romans 4 says: *For this reason it is by faith, in order that it may be in accordance with grace.*

Returning to the story of Abraham, Paul adds:

Therefore it was also credited to him as righteousness.

Now not for his sake only was it written that it was credited to him, but for our sake also, to whom it will be credited, as those who believe in Him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead, He who was delivered over because of our transgressions, and was raised because of our justification. (Romans 4:22-25 NASB)

So this is another important picture of salvation, drawn up for us by the Spirit of God, against the background of the Roman - and subsequent - legal systems. In this picture we have seen that the Bible word 'justification' is the legal and formal acquittal from guilt by God as Judge; it's the declaring of a verdict of 'not guilty'. How good it is to know that we are no longer guilty

before a holy God as a result of having put our faith in Jesus Christ, his son!
And what a wonderful pronouncement by God the Judge - the
pronouncement of the sinner as righteous, whenever he or she believes on
the Lord Jesus Christ! As someone has pointed out, there's an easy way to
think of the word 'justified': simply sound it out as "just-as-if-I'd never
sinned"!

3. The temple shrine

At the start of this new chapter let's look again at Paul's New Testament letter which he wrote to his friends in Rome. For the four pictures of salvation which are the theme of this booklet can all be found well documented in the apostle Paul's letter. In Romans chapter 3 verses 24 and 25, after telling us that we have all sinned, the Holy Spirit of God through Paul continues with the good news of salvation: *being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed.* (Romans 3:24,25)

There are three descriptions there of the work Jesus Christ, the Son of God, performed when he died on a Roman cross just outside the city of Jerusalem some two thousand years ago. What took place there is first of all viewed as 'redemption'. That was the subject of the first chapter in the booklet. It's a commercial term drawn from the marketplace where in the society of those days humans as well as other goods were bought and sold. We understood redemption as the idea of someone being bought out of the slave market and being given their freedom - one picture of our salvation as being from the slavery of sin.

Another way in which the cross of Christ was viewed in the two verses we read was as a 'demonstration' - of God's justice. Previously, Paul explains, God had in his forbearance passed over sins. But the cross stands for all time to make it absolutely clear that God never at any time had the intention of ignoring them, far less condoning them. The cross was planned in advance as the demonstration of his justice. The language at this point is legal language, of course, borrowed from the law court, and we spent time on that picture of salvation in our previous study.

Now, we're going to be occupied with the third view of the cross that's found within the span of verses 24 and 25 of Romans chapter 3. The third view of the cross is contained in the description of what happened there as being a 'propitiation'. This is an important Bible word, but one that perhaps needs even more by way of explanation than the others.

If the word 'redemption' was one which was then in use in the marketplaces;

and if the word 'justification' would have been encountered in the law courts; then the word 'propitiation' would have been commonly used in the pagan temples of the time. In that setting it meant to placate or to appease the angry gods which the pagans acknowledged.

At first we might think there can be no connection between this idea of turning away anger and the biblical teaching of Christianity. After all, the living and true God who is our creator is presented to us in the pages of the Bible as being an unchanging God, certainly not fickle and petty-minded, which was how the pagans viewed their gods. Their gods were always needing to be placated - but let's take a closer look ...

In these verses in Romans chapters 1, 2 and 3, Paul's describing God's solution for the human predicament, which is not only sin, but also God's wrath upon sin. Perhaps today the idea of an angry God is considered less than a Christian point of view. But if our property is defaced or our loved ones come under an unprovoked attack, we would expect to feel righteous indignation against the wrong done to us. It's what we then do with that anger that can involve sinful behaviour. God's righteous anger is never uncontrolled.

So we're going to have to identify exactly how this term 'propitiation' is different within a Christian understanding. The reason why it's necessary, and the one who initiates it, and even the means by which it's performed are all radically different within Christianity compared with the way in which propitiation was understood in pagan temples and the background customs of New Testament times. Remember by propitiation we mean the turning away of God's anger.

Among the pagans the need for propitiation arose because they understood the gods to be angry simply because they were a bad-tempered bunch, always subject to mood swings. The Christian explanation of the need for turning away God's anger could not be more different. God's anger, or wrath, is his consistent antagonism against sin, his hatred of anything that's morally evil. God's holy nature cannot accommodate any wrongdoing. It remains hostile to anything which misses the mark of his glorious perfection.

Next we think of how the pagans assumed that only they could appease their gods, after all it was they who had somehow offended them. In the Christian setting, however, the Bible plainly teaches us that we cannot appease God's righteous anger; nothing we can do can make ourselves acceptable to God. But it goes on to tell us that God has done what we could not do. This is how

the apostle John puts it:

In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. (1 John 4:9,10)

What we couldn't do, God has done. At the cross God's anger was turned away from us and directed at himself in the person of his son, Jesus Christ. We need to be very clear about the fact that both the initiative and the action of this propitiation lay with God.

Then there's the means by which propitiation was made. The pagans bribed their gods with various sweetmeats. This was very different from the sacrificial system we read about in the Old Testament, because even in it the people were made to understand they were giving back to God from what he had given them in the first place. A verse in Leviticus made that clear:

For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it for you on the altar to make atonement for your souls, for it is the blood that makes atonement by the life. (Leviticus 17:11)

In the New Testament it's even clearer that the work of salvation and the means by which God's wrath is turned away from us is not our own doing, but is all of God's grace. We return to our opening text from Romans chapter 3:

being justified as a gift by His grace through the redemption which is in Christ Jesus; whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God He passed over the sins previously committed. (Romans 3:24,25)

So there we have it: a third biblical picture of salvation. In contrast with the previous two we've looked at – where the word concerned, be it redemption or justification, had an agreed meaning which could simply be applied to Christian teaching – we've seen that the language of the temple shrines (in particular, this word propitiation) had to be redefined.

Finally, it's worth noting that Paul addressed this letter to Christian believers, calling them 'saints' (Romans 1:7) – in other words, those who had been sanctified. This terminology was also one that had a background in the pagan Greek religions. There it meant 'devoted to the gods' (Liddell and Scott). For example, if a Greek worshipper brought a gift to his god, he devoted it to that god. The gift became holy in that sense. There's no thought of purity in the word, but only the idea of being set apart from common use so as to be

devoted to the gods. Paul can biblically describe every Christian believer as a saint in the sense that the Holy Spirit has taken each believing sinner and set him or her apart for God by placing them 'in Christ'. What's more, corresponding to that, there's to be a practical holiness - or sanctification - increasingly seen in the purity of the believer's life for the Lord Jesus. There again we have to part company with the pagan background of the word, for in the Greek thought of holiness there was no sense of morality, for the pagan religions of that time were in fact rather immoral. God's thoughts are indeed much higher than our own!

4. The family circle

To introduce our fourth and final picture of salvation, we now need to introduce ourselves to what would have been in many respects a fairly typical family. So far we've seen how Paul's pictures of salvation were drawn from the marketplace, the law courts and the pagan temple shrines. For this last picture we come much closer to home - into the circle of family life. So let's meet the family. Dad and Mum appear to be comfortably well off; well-liked and, what's more, they're committed Christians. They host the gatherings of the local church in their own home, and they've a son who's active in serving the Lord.

Sometime back there was real drama in the household when a domestic help ran off - with how much of the 'silverware' we're not entirely sure. The fuss soon died down, until one Sunday in church there was a dramatic announcement which contained some startling news ...

Perhaps, by this stage, you may have a feeling that you already know this family from somewhere. Perhaps you do - from the pages of the New Testament! Dad is Philemon; and Apphia is his wife. The Church of God at Colossae (in first century Turkey) meets in their home. Their son, we believe, is Archippus whom no less than the apostle Paul respects as a 'fellow soldier'. It was from this household that Onesimus ran off - and didn't stop running for a 1,000 miles until he reached Rome! That was quite a marathon, but it was necessary because his crime was punishable by death under Roman law.

Actually, it seems there might have been two letters to be read to the church that Sunday morning we referred to. They are the Bible letters we now know as Colossians and Philemon.

Have you ever wondered why the letter to Philemon is included in the Bible? It's only 25 verses long, with no deep meaning or direct teaching; and it's generally ignored even by the Christian public. One good reason it's there is to illustrate how we can mend broken relationships. It's also a prime example of how we should put Bible teaching into immediate daily practice.

We don't fully know why Onesimus ran away. In part, it could have been to escape the gospel at home. Perhaps there's a clue (v.18) that he'd stolen 'something for his journey'. Facing a death sentence, he just kept on running. A big city like Rome was just the place to 'lose himself'. In fact, it was there

that he 'found himself' - through meeting Paul and through becoming a born-again Christian. Perhaps Onesimus either fell into trouble in Rome or found employment in the prison service. Whatever the case, it was in prison he met the apostle Paul - and Epaphras. He could hardly have expected to meet Epaphras who was from his hometown of Colossae 1,000 miles away, but God's providence is a wonderful thing! It's even possible that Epaphras was acquainted with some of the facts concerning Philemon and his runaway slave who was now standing before them.

We can be sure that Paul, in conversation with Onesimus, lost no time in telling him about his need to know Jesus Christ as saviour. Onesimus listened and by God's grace, responded. So, like Abraham, Paul had the joy of having a son in his old age - a spiritual one! And like Joseph, he had been made fruitful in trying conditions! It was all going to work together for good: not only with Onesimus' saving faith in Christ, but with his return and reconciliation to his master! For Paul was sending him back to Colossae to be reconciled with Philemon. But he wasn't sending him back empty-handed: he and Tychicus would be carrying two letters that are now found in our Bibles.

The two letters - to the Colossians and to Philemon - were written and delivered at the same time (Colossians 4:7-9). 'Colossians' has the direct teaching about Christ and Christian relationships; while the letter to Philemon (which I imagine the whole church heard too) simply contained a strikingly timed appeal to put it into immediate practice in the case of Onesimus who came with them!

Very relevant teaching for exactly that kind of real life situation is found in the letter to the Colossians:

there is no distinction between ... slave and freeman ... as those who have been chosen of God ... put on a heart of compassion, ... forgiving each other, whoever has a complaint against anyone; just as the Lord forgave you, so also should you. (Colossians 3:11-13 NAS).

And if that seemed to have a message applicable to Philemon, a little later on there was a message that was just as applicable to Onesimus, the runaway slave:

Slaves, in all things obey those who are your masters on earth, not with external service, as those who merely please men, but with sincerity of heart, fearing the Lord. (Colossians 3:22 NAS)

How often have we heard Bible teaching and been slow to put it into practice?

They had an immediate opportunity brought before them in the second letter! In the more personal letter to Philemon, Paul urged Philemon to apply the teaching on reconciliation and forgiveness. What this demonstrates - quite dramatically - is the fact that reconciliation is readily associated with, and frequently needed, in family life (or life within a household) which in those days included domestic slaves.

Reconciliation with one another is one thing (albeit an important matter) but Paul spoke of our need of salvation in terms of our need to be reconciled with God. In his second letter to Corinth he put it like this:

If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and He has committed to us the word of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:17-20)

So reconciliation is another of the major words that explain and illustrate the Christian message of salvation. Perhaps we're reminded of another story told by Jesus, not of the runaway slave, but of the runaway son. In Luke chapter 15 we read how this young man demanded his share of his father's inheritance and then left home and spent it wastefully. Soon he was deserted by the friends he had while his money lasted, and being in debt, he was reduced to feeding pigs. It was there he came to his senses and decided to return to his father and throw himself on his mercy. If only he might hope that his father would allow him to live in the lean-to behind the cowshed, he would be prepared to earn his passage among the hired hands on his father's farm. But when he turns around and goes to meet his father and blurts out his confession, "I have sinned", he discovers that his father has been waiting for him and he is welcomed back as a son with great rejoicing.

Sin (our natural tendency to go our own way) is the thing that spoils our lives. It separates us from God. We are estranged from him and our debt against him accumulates. When God's Spirit works in our hearts we, too, come to our senses, and whenever we throw ourselves upon God's mercy, asking for the forgiveness that's found in Jesus Christ, his son, we discover something more than we could ever have expected: God as a Father who welcomes us into his own family.

When we turn from our sins and turn to God, when we receive Jesus Christ by faith, we find ourselves reconciled to God - and born again as a child of God (John 1:12), and adopted as a legal heir of a glorious heavenly inheritance (Ephesians 1:5; 1 Peter 1:3,4). Isn't that wonderful? In the Roman world a child was formally adopted at maturity, in an act that officially declared him as legal heir to his father. It also wasn't unheard of in the Roman world for a household slave to be adopted. Paul's language in Galatians chapter 4 captures something of this when he says:

... as long as the heir is a child, he does not differ at all from a slave although he is owner of everything, but he is under guardians and managers until the date set by the father. So also we, while we were children, were held in bondage under the elemental things of the world. But when the fullness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:1-5)

Reconciliation and adoption: two great Bible words explaining the Christian message of salvation as the mending of our broken relationship with God.

And with them we conclude this booklet on pictures of salvation - one which has seen us visit the marketplace, the law courts and the temple shrines, as well as the more homely family setting.

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