

Word Study H3724 *kopher* ransom

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Introduction

ToDo: Add commentary / overview

H3724 *kopher* ^{KJC:17}, ransom⁸, bribe², camphire², satisfaction², pitch¹, sum¹, villages¹

כֶּפֶר

A masculine noun meaning a ransom, a bribe, a half-shekel. The most common translation of the word is ransom. It refers to the price demanded in order to redeem or rescue a person. The irresponsible owner of a bull that killed someone and was known to have gored people previously could be redeemed by the ransom that would be placed on him ([Exo 21:30](#)). When a census of people was taken in Israel, adult males had to pay a half-shekel ransom to keep the Lord's plague from striking them ([Exo 30:12](#)). A murderer could not be redeemed by a ransom ([Num 35:31](#)). Yet money, without God's explicit approval, could not serve as a ransom for a human being ([Psa 49:7](#) [8]). On the other hand, money could serve as a ransom to buy off a person's human enemies ([Pro 13:8](#)). God sometimes used a wicked person as a ransom to redeem a righteous person ([Pro 21:18](#)); God ransomed Israel from Babylonian captivity for the ransom price of three nations ([Isa 43:3](#)): Egypt, Seba, and Cush.

The meaning of the word becomes a bribe when used in certain circumstances. For example, Samuel declared that he had never taken a bribe ([1Sa 12:3](#)); and Amos castigated the leaders of Israel for taking bribes ([Amo 5:12](#)). [Pro 6:35](#) describes a jealous husband whose fury would not allow him to take a bribe to lessen his anger.

Total KJV Occurrences: 17

ransom, 8 [Exo 30:11-12](#) (2), [Job 33:24](#), [Job 36:18](#), [Psa 49:7](#), [Pro 6:35](#), [Pro 13:8](#), [Pro 21:18](#), [Isa 43:3](#)

bribe, 2 [1Sa 12:3](#), [Amo 5:12](#)

camphire, 2 [Son 1:14](#), [Son 4:13](#)

satisfaction, 2 [Num 35:31-32](#) (2)

pitch, 1 [Gen 6:14](#)

sum, 1 [Exo 21:30](#)

villages, 1 [1Sa 6:18](#)

<http://www.ahavta.org/Commentary%20Y-2/Y2-17.htm>

This payment is variously referred to being “a ransom,” “a redemption,” or “an atonement.” Let us look at the definition of these three English words before we look at the original Hebrew text.

Ransom n. 1. The money or price paid for the redemption of a prisoner or slave, or for goods captured by an enemy; that which procures the release of a prisoner or captive, or of captured property, and restores the one to liberty and the other to the original owner...2. Release from captivity, bondage, or the possession of an enemy...3. In law, a sum paid for the pardon of some great offense and the discharge of the offender; or a fine paid in lieu of corporal punishment...4. In Scripture, the price paid for a forfeited life, or for delivery or release from capital punishment...5. The price paid for procuring the pardon of sins and the redemption of the sinner from punishment.¹⁵

Redemption n. 1. Repurchase of captured goods or prisoners; the act of procuring the deliverance of persons or things from the possession and power of captors by the payment of an equivalent; ransom; release...2. Deliverance from bondage, distress, or from liability to any evil or forfeiture, either by money, labor, or other means...3. Repurchase, as of lands alienated...4. The liberation of an estate from a mortgage; or the purchase of the right to re-enter upon it by paying the principal sum for which it was mortgaged, with interest and cost; also, the right of redeeming and re-entering...5. Repurchasing of notes, bills, or other evidence of debt by paying their value in specie to their holders.¹⁶

Atonement n. 1. Agreement; concord; reconciliation, after enmity or controversy...2. Expiation; satisfaction of reparation made by giving an equivalent for an injury, or by doing or suffering that which is received in satisfaction for an offense or injury...3. In theology, the expiation of sin made by the obedience and personal sufferings of Christ.¹⁷

Bouvier's on Ransom and Redemption

Ransom

contracts, war.

1. An agreement made between the commander of a capturing vessel with the commander of a vanquished vessel, at sea, by which the former permits the latter to depart with his vessel, and gives him a safe conduct, in consideration of a sum of money, which the commander of the vanquished vessel, in his own name, and in the name of the owners of his vessel and cargo, promises to pay at a future time named, to the other.

2. This contract is usually made in writing in duplicate, one of which is kept by the vanquished vessel which is its safe conduct; and the other by the conquering vessel, which is properly called ransom bill.

3. This contract, when made in good faith, and not locally prohibited, is valid, and may be enforced. Such contracts have never been prohibited in this country. ^{1 Kent, Com. 105.} In England they are generally forbidden. ^{Chit. Law of Nat. 90 91; Poth. Tr. du Dr. de Propr. n. 127. Vide 2 Bro. Civ. Law, 260; Wesk. 435; 7 Com. Dig. 201; Marsh. Ins. 431; 2 Dall. 15; 15 John. 6; 3 Burr. 1734.}

The money paid for the redemption of such property is also called the ransom.

REDEMPTION

contracts.

1. The act of taking back by the seller from the buyer a thing which had been sold subject to the right of repurchase.
2. The right of redemption then is an agreement by which the seller reserves to himself the power of taking back the thing sold by returning the price paid for it. As to the fund out of which a mortgaged estate is to be redeemed, see Payment. Vide Equity of redemption.