

# 1 Peter 1:18

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold, from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers;

## Analysis

Peter grounds holiness in redemption's costly nature. "Forasmuch as ye know" (eidotes hoti) indicates settled knowledge—believers definitively know what follows. "Ye were not redeemed with corruptible things" (ou... elythrōthēte phtharetois) uses lytroō, the marketplace term for purchasing slaves' freedom by paying ransom price. Believers were enslaved to sin; Christ paid ransom securing liberation. Peter specifies what was NOT the price: "corruptible things, as silver and gold" (phtharetois, argyriō ē chrysiō)—precious metals were ancient world's ultimate currency, yet inadequate for spiritual redemption. "Corruptible" (phtharetois) means perishable, subject to decay—even gold and silver ultimately perish. They cannot purchase eternal redemption. Believers were redeemed "from your vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" (ek tēs mataias hymōn anastrophēs patroparadotou). "Vain" (mataias) means empty, futile, purposeless—describing pre-conversion life's ultimate meaninglessness apart from God. "Received by tradition from your fathers" (patroparadotou, literally "father-handed-down") indicates ancestral customs and inherited lifestyles passed through generations. This likely refers primarily to pagan traditions (given audience) but includes any human tradition apart from Christ.

## Historical Context

For Gentile Christians in Asia Minor, "vain conversation received by tradition from your fathers" referred to pagan religious practices, idolatry, immoral behaviors,

and empty philosophies inherited from ancestors. Many faced family pressure to continue ancestral practices—abandoning family gods brought accusations of impiety and family disloyalty. Peter assures them: these traditions, however ancient and culturally revered, were ultimately empty, requiring redemption. The phrase may also address Jewish Christian readers who might elevate ancestral traditions (Pharisaic regulations, oral law) above gospel liberty. Jesus similarly critiqued traditions that nullified God's word (Matthew 15:1-9). The emphasis on silver and gold's inadequacy echoes Old Testament teaching that material wealth cannot redeem souls (Psalm 49:7-9). In ancient world, wealthy individuals could purchase freedom for enslaved persons or pay ransoms for war captives. But spiritual slavery to sin required different currency—precious blood, not precious metal. Early church fathers contrasted Christianity's costliness (requiring God's Son's death) with pagan religions' cheapness (requiring only ritual observance).

## Related Passages

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**Ephesians 2:8** — Salvation by grace through faith

**Romans 10:9** — Confession and belief for salvation

## Study Questions

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1. What specific 'empty' traditions or cultural practices from your background does Christ's redemption free you from?
2. How does understanding redemption's costliness (not silver/gold but Christ's blood) affect your valuation of salvation and motivation for holy living?

## Interlinear Text

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εἰδότες	ὅτι	οὐ	φθαρτοῖς	ἀργυρίῳ	ἢ
Forasmuch as ye know	that	not	with corruptible things	as silver	and
G1492	G3754	G3756	G5349	G694	G2228
χρυσίῳ ἐλυτρώθητε	ἐκ	τῆς	ματαίας	ὑμῶν	ἀναστροφῆς
gold	redeemed	from	vain	your	conversation
G5553	G3084	G1537	G3588	G3152	G391
πατροπαραδότου					
received by tradition from your fathers					
G3970					

## Additional Cross-References

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**1 Corinthians 6:20** (Parallel theme): For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

**1 Corinthians 7:23** (Parallel theme): Ye are bought with a price; be not ye the servants of men.

**Titus 2:14** (Redemption): Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.

**Galatians 1:4** (Parallel theme): Who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father:

**Ephesians 4:17** (Parallel theme): This I say therefore, and testify in the Lord, that ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,

**Romans 1:21** (Parallel theme): Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

**1 Peter 1:7** (Parallel theme): That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ:

**1 Peter 4:3** (Parallel theme): For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

**Psalms 39:6** (Parallel theme): Surely every man walketh in a vain shew: surely they are disquieted in vain: he heapeth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them.

**Psalms 62:10** (Parallel theme): Trust not in oppression, and become not vain in robbery: if riches increase, set not your heart upon them.

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