

# The Kinsman-Redeemer

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*Where the type and the fulfillment share a bloodline*

*Israel's law gave a way back to anyone who had lost land, freedom, or family — through a near kinsman who was willing and able to pay. The book of Ruth tells the story of that law working in real life. And then the New Testament reveals a final mystery: the Moabite widow whose redemption pictures Christ's redemption of His people also becomes His literal ancestor. The type and the fulfillment share a bloodline.*

## I

WILDERNESS · SINAI LAW

### The Law of Redemption

*A near kinsman, willing and able, may buy back what was lost*

*Leviticus 25:25–28, 47–55; Numbers 35:19–21*

The Lord gave Israel a remarkable provision in the Law: nothing in Israel was ever permanently lost. If a man fell on hard times and had to sell his ancestral land, or even sell himself into servitude, there was always a way back — through the *go'el*, the kinsman-redeemer.

*If a fellow countryman of yours becomes so poor he has to sell part of his property, then his nearest kinsman is to come and buy back what his relative has sold..*

*If a fellow countryman becomes poor with regard to him and sells himself to a stranger... he shall have redemption right after he has been sold. One of his brothers may redeem him, or his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or one of his blood relatives from his family may redeem him.*

— Leviticus 25:25, 47–49

The right belonged to family. The duty fell on the nearest kinsman first; if he could not or would not, it passed to the next nearest. The redeemer had to be related by blood, willing to act, and able to pay the price.

The law had a parallel in the year of Jubilee — every fiftieth year, all land returned to its original tribal family, and all enslaved Israelites went free (Lev 25:8–13). Even if no kinsman had redeemed, time itself eventually did. But for those who could not wait, there was the *go'el*.

A PICTURE OF GRACE BUILT INTO THE LAW

The whole institution is hopeful: *nothing in Israel was meant to be permanently lost*. Whatever the failure, the family, the freedom, the inheritance — there was always a way back, by someone who would take it as his own to redeem. Centuries later, when Job cried *I know that my Redeemer lives* (Job 19:25), he was reaching for the go'el his Law had taught him to expect.

## II

### DAYS OF THE JUDGES

# The Family Undone

*A famine, a flight, three deaths, and a return with nothing*

*Ruth 1*

In the days when the judges judged, there was a famine in the land. A man of Bethlehem named Elimelech took his wife Naomi and their two sons Mahlon and Chilion, and went to live in Moab. Then Elimelech died. The sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Ten years later, both sons died. Naomi was left without her two boys and without her husband.

Hearing the Lord had visited Judah with bread again, Naomi resolved to return. Her daughters-in-law walked partway with her. She urged them to turn back: *go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me*. Orpah kissed her mother-in-law and turned back. But Ruth clung to her:

*Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.*

— Ruth 1:16–17

They came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. The whole city stirred: *is this Naomi?* She answered: *do not call me Naomi (pleasant); call me Mara (bitter), for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the Lord has brought me back empty*.

The book has its setup. A widow. Her foreign widowed daughter-in-law. No husband. No sons. No land they could work. The family of Elimelech has fallen off the edge of Israel. The line is about to die out. The story now needs a redeemer.

## Gleaning in Boaz's Field

*She happened to come — and the redeemer is identified*

Ruth 2

Ruth says to Naomi: *let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may find favor.* So she went out, and she *happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz* (Ruth 2:3). The Hebrew is deliberate — literally *her chance chanced upon*. The apparent randomness is the providence.

Boaz arrives from Bethlehem to greet his reapers: *may the Lord be with you.* He sees Ruth and asks his foreman, *whose young woman is this?* When he learns who she is, he speaks to her gently: *do not go to glean in another field; stay close by my maids. I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, drink from what the servants draw.*

Ruth falls on her face: *why have I found favor in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?* Boaz answers:

*All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me... May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.*

— Ruth 2:11–12

At meal time he gives her roasted grain himself; she eats and is satisfied and has some left over. He commands the reapers to *let her glean even among the sheaves and do not insult her. Also you shall purposely pull out for her some grain from the bundles and leave it that she may glean.*

Ruth returns to Naomi with an ephah of barley — far more than ordinary gleaning yields. Naomi asks where she gleaned. When she hears the name Boaz, she gasps:

*The man is our relative; he is one of our closest kinsmen.*

— Ruth 2:20

The Hebrew word is *go'elenu* — *our redeemer*.

Boaz blesses Ruth for taking refuge *under the wings* of the God of Israel (Ruth 2:12). That same image returns in chapter three when Ruth asks Boaz to spread *his* covering — literally his wing — over her. The God whose wing she trusted is the God who will answer through the redeemer she trusted. The redeemer's covering and the Lord's covering are one thing.

## IV

### DAYS OF THE JUDGES

# The Threshing Floor

*Spread your covering over your maid — for you are a close relative*

Ruth 3

Naomi says to Ruth: *my daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?* She instructs Ruth: tonight Boaz winnows barley at the threshing floor. Wash and anoint yourself; put on your best clothes. Do not make yourself known to him until he has finished eating and drinking. When he lies down, mark the place. Then go uncover his feet and lie down. *He will tell you what you shall do.*

Ruth does so. At midnight Boaz startles awake and finds a woman lying at his feet.

*Who are you? — I am Ruth your maid. Spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative.*

— Ruth 3:9

The Hebrew word translated *covering* is the word for wing. She is asking him to do what the Lord does for those who take refuge in Him — to extend his wing in covering kindness, in commitment, in marriage and redemption. She is asking him to take the role of go'el.

Boaz answers: *may you be blessed of the Lord, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich. Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.*

But Boaz is honest about one thing: *now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.* The right of redemption belongs first to that nearer kinsman. Boaz will not act dishonorably. If the nearer relative will redeem, let him; if not, *as the Lord lives, I will redeem you.*

He sends her home before dawn with six measures of barley — not empty-handed. *Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today.*

## V

### DAYS OF THE JUDGES

## The Nearer Kinsman Declines

*I cannot redeem for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance*

Ruth 4:1–12

Boaz goes to the gate of the city — the place of public legal transactions — and sits down. The nearer kinsman passes by. Boaz hails him: *turn aside, friend, sit down here*. The Hebrew is striking: *pelsoni almoni*, literally *so-and-so*. The man is never named. Even Scripture withholds his name.

Boaz gathers ten elders of the city as witnesses. He lays the matter out: *Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if not, tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.*

The nearer kinsman answers without hesitation: *I will redeem it*. The field alone is a good deal — ancestral land, no widow attached.

Then Boaz adds the catch:

*On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance.*

— Ruth 4:5

The redemption is not just of the land. It includes the Moabite widow and the duty to raise up an heir to Elimelech's line, an heir whose claim on the field would eventually take it out of the redeemer's family. The nearer kinsman recalculates instantly:

*I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. You redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it.*

— Ruth 4:6

He had the right. He was kin. He was able. He was not willing — the cost was more than he would pay. So he steps aside, and the redemption passes to the next kinsman.

The custom of the time was to seal a transaction by removing one's sandal and giving it to the other party. The nearer kinsman removes his sandal. Boaz takes it. He turns to the elders and to all the people:

*You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his birthplace. You are witnesses today.*

— Ruth 4:9–10

The elders bless him: *may the Lord make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel... may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah.*

#### THE CLOSER RELATIVE FAILED AT THE SECOND CONDITION

He was kin. He was able. He was unwilling — because the cost was more than he would pay. Christ, by contrast, met all three. He *became* kin (Heb 2:14); He was *willing* (*for the joy set before Him He endured the cross*, Heb 12:2); He was *able* (*precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished*, 1 Pet 1:19). The closer kinsman is the foil. He shows what redemption would look like if any of the three conditions were missing.

## VI

### DAYS OF THE JUDGES · LINKING TO THE PROMISE

## The Type Becomes Genealogy

*Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today*

*Ruth 4:13–22; Matthew 1:5–6*

Boaz takes Ruth, and she becomes his wife. *The Lord enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.* The women of the city say to Naomi:

*Blessed is the Lord who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel. May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.*

— Ruth 4:14–15

Naomi takes the child and lays him in her lap and becomes his nurse. The women name him Obed.

The book closes with the four short verses that make the rest of the Bible reread the whole story:

*Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron, and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab, and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon, and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed, and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.*

— Ruth 4:18–22

The story we have just read is not just a story about a kinsman-redeemer. It is the story of how King David got here. The widow at the gate, the Moabiteess gleaned behind the reapers, the woman lying at Boaz's feet on the threshing floor — she becomes *the great-grandmother of David*.

And David is not the end. A thousand years later, Matthew opens his Gospel with another genealogy:

MATTHEW 1:5–6 (EXCERPT)

Salmon by Rahab → Boaz by Ruth → Obed → Jesse → David

*... fourteen generations to the deportation, fourteen more to ...*

Jesus Christ

Two Gentile women in the line: **Rahab** the Canaanite harlot who hid the spies at Jericho, and **Ruth** the Moabite widow at the threshing floor. Both were outside the covenant by birth; both came under the wings of the God of Israel by faith; both became links in the chain that produced the Christ.

This is the moment the type became literal. The story of redemption did not just *picture* Christ's redemption. Ruth's redemption *produced* Him. The Moabiteess at the gate didn't only rehearse the Redeemer. **She became His ancestor.** The type and the fulfillment share a bloodline.

## A THOUSAND YEARS PASS

### VII

#### THE NEW TESTAMENT

## Christ Our Kinsman-Redeemer

*He had to be made like His brethren in all things — that He might redeem*

The New Testament reads the kinsman-redeemer law and the book of Ruth as a single doctrinal arc, fulfilled in Christ. Hebrews explains the structure with care:

*Since then the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil... Therefore, He had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people.*

— Hebrews 2:14, 17

The argument is precisely the kinsman-redeemer argument. The redeemer must be kin. Christ was not by nature human; He *became* human, deliberately, in order to qualify. *He had to be made like His brethren in all things.* Galatians 4:4 says it again, in a single sentence:

*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.*

— Galatians 4:4–5

Born of a woman: the kinsman condition. Born under the Law: the position from which redemption was needed. Sent for the purpose of redemption: the willingness. And what He paid was sufficient:

*Knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.*

— 1 Peter 1:18–19

Kin. Willing. Able. The three conditions the Law required of every go'el, Christ met perfectly. The closer kinsman in Ruth's story refused because the cost would jeopardize his own inheritance. Christ's redemption cost Him His life — and rather than refusing, He set His face toward Jerusalem (Luke 9:51) and went.

Job, reaching across the centuries from the very beginning of Israel's long story, already saw it — the kinsman-redeemer of all his suffering, who would stand on the earth in the latter days:

*For I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth. Even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God; whom I myself shall behold, and whom my eyes will see and not another. My heart faints within me!*

— Job 19:25–27



The Hebrew word for *Redeemer* in Job 19:25 is *go'eli* — *my kinsman-redeemer*. Job did not yet know His name. But he knew He would live, and would stand on the earth, and would be flesh and blood as Job himself was — the kinsman who, in the latter days, would secure for him everything he had lost.

## Notes on the typology — how this study reads Scripture

**Two Gentile women in the line of Christ.** Matthew 1 names Rahab and Ruth in the genealogy of Jesus — both Gentiles, both brought into Israel by faith. Their inclusion is not incidental. The line that produces the Savior of the world had Gentile blood in it from the time of the conquest. This is not a footnote to the typology of redemption; it is part of the redemption itself.

### What Scripture explicitly names

Hebrews 2:14–17 makes the kinsman argument directly: the redeemer must share flesh and blood with those He redeems, and Christ deliberately did so. Galatians 4:4–5 makes the willingness explicit (*God sent forth His Son*) and the purpose explicit (*that He might redeem*). 1 Peter 1:18–19 makes the price explicit. The pattern is not imposed on the texts; the texts themselves are kinsman-redeemer theology.

### Job's prophecy

Job 19:25 uses the technical kinsman-redeemer word. Job is the oldest book of the Bible by most accounts — predating even the formal giving of the Law. Yet the longing for a kinsman who would stand on the earth in the latter days and undo what death had done is already present. The institution of the *go'el* in Leviticus 25 is the Law's shape of a hope men had carried since Eden.

### What the unnamed kinsman shows

Ruth 4:1–6 records a man who had the right of redemption first and declined. Scripture withholds his name: *peloni almoni*, “so-and-so.” A man who would not bear the cost of redemption forfeits even a place in the story. By contrast, Boaz is named, blessed, and remembered — and Christ, who paid in full, is named the King of kings forever.

### The companion to this spoke

The Lamb God Provides traces the same redemption pattern through a different image — the lamb, rather than the kinsman. Both spokes converge on the same fact: redemption is by death, by a willing substitute, by one who became what we are in order to do for us what we could not do for ourselves. The two images are complementary. The lamb tells us how the price was paid. The kinsman tells us why this particular Person was qualified to pay it.

*Primary Source: The Holy Bible (Leviticus 25; Numbers 35:19–21; Ruth; Matthew 1:1–17; Galatians 4:4–5; Hebrews 2:14–17; 1 Peter 1:18–19; Job 19:25–27)*

*A deep-dive companion to the Noble Mind Study Old Testament Timeline · [The Lamb God Provides](#) · [Return to the timeline](#)*