

4. The Kinsman Redeemer

May 26, 2011

There is a word many Christians have heard and read numerous times in sermons, articles, and in the Bible, yet they may not know the exact meaning because they were not taught or didn't research it by themselves. The word is "redeemed".

In secular terms, people may think about 'redeeming their coupons'. But spiritually there is whole lot more than that.

According to the Dictionary I use:

It means, "To buy back, to recover by payment or other satisfaction."

But in a theological dictionary, it defines as "to deliver from sin and its consequences by means of a sacrifice offered for the sinner." Yes, it is a heavy duty theological word.

So what is the difference between 'ransom' and 'redeem'? Though both mean to buy back, 'redeem' is wider in its application than 'ransom'. To 'ransom' is "to recover a person from captivity by paying a stipulated price", but to 'redeem' "from sin by sacrifice."

In this final chapter of the Book of Ruth, we find a kinsman redeemer of the family - Naomi and Ruth who came from the land of Moabites where the Israelites were not supposed to be in, nor were they allowed to associate with them in any matters according to a commandment of the Lord.

The Book of Ruth started with three funerals but closes with a wedding. It started with a great deal of despair and hopelessness, but it ends with overflowing joy in the little town of Bethlehem.

Grant that not all of life's stories have this kind of happy ending; but this Book reminds us that God still writes the last chapter and He hasn't finished it yet.

More over, this Book contains two men from Bethlehem; one is in the story and the other is implied by the story. One is written about and the other is foreshadowed. Of course I am talking about Boaz the wealthy Bethlehemite who became the kinsman redeemer, the other Jesus Christ who was born in the same town. One was a hero to two women; the other is the hero to the entire humanity.

A. YOU DO IT

Ruth 4:1-6 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it." 5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you

must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.” 6 And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

Can you imagine how Boaz felt? I am sure that his heart sank when this close relative said, “I will redeem it.” A major bummer. But Boaz couldn’t give up yet. He pulled out his ace card - Ruth the Moabite woman came in a package deal. When the close relative said, “You redeem my right of redemption for yourself,” Boaz said, “I need to pray about this. OK, I will do it.” All that in one sentence.

The law of the kinsman redeemer is given in Leviticus 25 and the law governing levirate marriage is found in Deuteronomy 25 which we studied last time. The purpose of these laws was to preserve the name and protect the property of families in Israel. *Leviticus 25:25-28 ‘If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. 26 Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, 27 then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. 28 But if he is not able to have it restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession.*

The tragedy is that the Jewish rulers didn’t always obey this law and the prophets had to rebuke them for stealing lands from the helpless in 1 Kings 21, Isaiah 5 and Habakkuk 2.

In Naomi’s case, she didn’t have any means to buy back her land in Bethlehem because she was dirt poor. Until the Year of Jubilee comes around, Naomi had no chance to get her land back. But the problem with the Year of Jubilee only came around every fifty years - a long time to wait for it.

When it comes to spiritual redemption, all people with the exception of Jesus Christ who was God/Man are in bondage to sin, death, and satan and unable to set themselves free.

To explain this, I need to take you to the beginning first and the future: The title deed to this planet earth was originally given to Adam in the Garden of Eden when God told him to subdue the earth according to Genesis 1:28. But Adam forfeited his right to ownership when he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You see, although Eve was tricked into eating the forbidden fruit, Adam’s was an overt, a calculated act of rebellion, which is why the Bible speaks of Adam’s sin as that which transferred to satan the title deed of our planet.

No human could buy the earth back because of the sinful nature we are born with. Does it mean that we are forever doomed? No, we have the Kinsman Redeemer of mankind.

This time we are going to go the future:

Rev 5:1-4 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to

loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

During the 7 year Great Tribulation time on earth in the future, apostle John was witnessing this scene in the Throne Room of God in heaven.

If similar to other scrolls in John's day, it was made of eight-by-ten-inch sheets of papyrus, which were connected horizontally and wound around a wooden handle. We see a scroll written on both sides and sealed with seven seals, which can be perplexing until one studies Jewish history. This means that this scroll is unusual. It wasn't common practice to write on both sides of the scroll. However we find numerous examples of a certain kind of document with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals: a title deed to a piece of property.

Initially, a title deed would be written only on the smooth side and sealed with a single seal. But if the owner became unable to meet his financial obligations, he would have to relinquish his title deed - upon the backside of which would be written his debts and upon which would be placed seven seals. If at any time during the ensuing seven years he could pay off his debts, the seals would be broken and the title deed returned.

All of this explains what is in the hand of the One who sits on the throne here in chapter 5. It's the title deed to planet earth.

According to the law that was given to the Israelites from Lev 25, we find that in redeeming the land, there had to be three qualifications to be met. If the original seller could not purchase the land back, one of his relatives can try it. That relative had to have money to buy the land back and willingly, not by force.

When we put this in the light of salvation through redemption aspect, we can clearly see how the Savior Jesus Christ comes into the picture: No man could purchase this earth back from satan, because there is no human who was sinless. None of us are qualified. Angels could not purchase the earth deed from satan, either, because they are not related to us. It had to be someone that has a human body, yet completely sinless. God took a form of humanity by putting aside His glory and made Himself lower than an angel becoming a human. However, throughout His earthly life, He did not sin against God's commands. At the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus cried out to the Father in heaven to allow the cup of the curse of men to pass by Him. But He willingly took our curse upon Himself by allowing Himself to be crucified.

By being a fellow human, Jesus met the first qualification; by being a perfect God without sin, He met the second qualification; and by willingly taking our curses upon Himself on the cross, He met the third qualification. Now, the deed is in the hands of God the Father.

Boaz was not concerned about getting another portion of land. He already had much land. He was in love with Ruth. For her sake, he was willing to purchase the land.

Jesus was not concerned about getting another planet, earth. There are tons of planets around the universe. If so desired, He could have made another one. Jesus was in love with the church, the people of God. For the sake of the church, He was willing to purchase the earth. What a love God has for us!

B. THE TRANSACTION WAS DONE

Ruth 4:7-12 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel. 8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal. 9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10 Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day." 11 And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. 12 May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the Lord will give you from this young woman."

Like Boaz, Jesus wasn't concerned about jeopardizing His own inheritance; instead, He made us a part of His inheritance. Like Boaz, Jesus made His plans privately, but He paid the price publicly; and like Boaz, Jesus did what He did because of His love for His bride.

Ephesians 1:11 In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will

What wonderful changes came into Ruth's life because she trusted Boaz and let him work on her behalf! She went from loneliness to love, from toil to rest, from poverty to riches, from worry to assurance, and from despair to hope. She was no longer "Ruth the Moabite widow," because the past was gone, and she was making a new beginning. She was now "Ruth the wife of Boaz," a name she was proud to bear.

C. LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER

Ruth 4:13-22 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! 15 And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him." 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. 17 Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. 18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

The women of Bethlehem had a word of praise for Ruth; she was better to Naomi than seven sons might have been. Of course, in the Bible the number seven symbolizes completion. The tribute to Ruth is striking in light of the importance placed on sons in the OT. One who possessed many sons would be assured of support in her old age and a continuation of her family line.

A genealogy of ten generations concludes the Book by linking Obed to David as the father of Jesse and thus as the grandfather of David. The first five names cover the period from the time of the entry into Egypt to the time of Moses, while the remaining five belong to the period of the early settlement in Canaan to the closing years of the judges.

The Moabites were not to enter the congregation of the Lord “even to the tenth generation”. But the story of Ruth has shown how a Moabite woman obtained an exalted place in Hebrew history.

D. APPLICATION

Never underestimate the power of the grace of God.