

JESUS CHRIST, MY KINSMAN-REDEEMER

Ruth 3:9

“And [Boaz] said, ‘Who are you?’ So she answered, ‘I am Ruth, your maidservant. Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant, for you are a near kinsman.’”

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The books of Ruth and Esther are the only books in God’s Word bearing the names of women. But O! what women! They faithfully serve as ideals for all godly women. And in observing such women as Ruth we well understand why the fourth-century Greek rhetorician Libanius exclaimed, “What women these Christians have!”

The story of Ruth begins with a man named Elimelech, whose name meant “My God is King” (1:2; all Scripture quotations are from Book of Ruth unless otherwise noted). His wife was Naomi, meaning “Pleasant” (1:2). Their two sons were Mahlon and Chilion, whose lack of health is indicated by the fact that their names meant “Sickly” and “Puny” (1:2). They resided in the town Bethlehem, or “House of Bread”, in the territory Judah, meaning “Praised” (1:1) – and people have bread in the house in which Jehovah is praised. But when famine deprived that house of bread, Elimelech relocated his family to Moab (1:1f), named for one born of an incestuous relationship (Genesis 19:31ff); God calls it “My washpot” (Psalm 60:8 / 108:9), the basin collecting the water poured over His feet in cleaning them, and therefore a place of utter contempt. Elimelech died shortly after arriving in Moab (1:3). His two sons married Moabite women named Orpah and Ruth (1:4): We do not know the meaning of Orpah’s name, but this is of no consequence because we will not hear of her again; but the name Ruth meant “Friend” – and what a friend she proved to be! Mahlon and Chilion also died, both childless, leaving Naomi and her daughters-in-law widows (1:5).

Naomi, having heard that God had been pleased to end the famine in Judah, and that He had again made bread plentiful there, decided to return to her homeland, accompanied by her daughters-in-law (1:6f). But at the border of

Judah she advised them to return to their homeland Moab (1:8-13). Orpah wept in grief, then returned to her people and her gods; but Ruth wept in love, being true to her name “Friend”, and clung to Naomi (1:14). Then she expressed her resolve: “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me” (1:16f).

Upon arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi confessed Jehovah had dealt bitterly with her because of her sin, for which reason she changed her name from Naomi to Mara, from “Pleasant” to “Bitterness” (1:19-21).

They arrived in Bethlehem at beginning of the barley harvest (1:22), when the harvesting of grains began. Ruth went into the fields as a gleaner, following the reapers (2:2-3a; see Leviticus 19:9f; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19). In the providence of God she gleaned in the field of Boaz (whose name perhaps meant “Fleetness”), a man of great wealth and a relative of Ruth’s deceased father-in-law (2:1, 3b). He had heard of her desertion of her pagan gods in order to find refuge in Jehovah of Israel, and of her loving care of her aged mother-in-law (for faith loves!), and had observed her diligence in gleaning (for faith works!); he therefore instructed his reapers to let her glean even among the sheaves, and to purposefully drop grain for her to glean, and to let her dine with the reapers (2:4-16).

Ruth consequently gleaned an extra-ordinary amount (2:17f). When Naomi learned how this came to be, she remembered that Boaz was a near-kinsman, and instructed Ruth to glean in

the fields of no one else (2:19-23).

“Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, ‘My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our kinsman? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.’ And [Ruth] said to her, ‘All that you say to me I will do.’ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. And he said, ‘Who are you?’ So she answered, ‘I am Ruth, your maidservant. Spread the corner of your garment over your maidservant [i.e., *take your maidservant under your wing*], for you are a near kinsman.’”

Boaz knew exactly what she meant, and what he consequently must do: He must fulfill to her the obligation of her kinsman-redeemer. Kinsmen were divinely obligated under the Mosaic economy to be redeemers to their brethren in four specific instances:

1. the redemption of a slain relative’s blood, as the “avenger of blood” (Numbers 35:9-21)
2. the redemption of a relative’s property (Leviticus 25:25)
3. the redemption of a relative’s liberty (Leviticus 25:47-49)
4. the redemption of a deceased childless relative’s name and inheritance (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)

Ruth needed a kinsman-redeemer in this last

regard – a relative to purchase the inheritance of the deceased Elimelech and his sons, and to marry her in the hope of raising up a male heir to receive that inheritance (see 4:1-10). Boaz with fleetness (being true to his name) dutifully consented to do so (3:10f). From the marriage of Boaz and Ruth, and in the blessed providence of God, was born Obed, who became the father of Jesse and grandfather of David (4:13-17), from whom descended Jesus the Messiah (Matthew ch.1, in which passage Ruth is one of only four women cited in the genealogy of Jesus Christ).

Boaz here is a type of Christ, and Ruth is a type of all God’s elect. As Ruth needed physical redemption by a kinsman for the restoration of her inheritance, God’s elect need spiritual redemption for the redemption of all they lost in their fall in Adam. And as Boaz was Ruth’s kinsman who also became her redeemer, so was Christ to all God’s elect. The account describing Ruth’s redemption by her kinsman-redeemer Boaz aptly typifies the redemption of God’s elect by their Kinsman-Redeemer Jesus Christ.

The following allegory is my own personal account of how I came to know Jesus Christ to be my Kinsman-Redeemer.

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I was raised by God-fearing parents. They dutifully reminded me of my need of salvation in Jesus Christ. But I casually took my salvation for granted.

I experienced a very emotional religious awakening February 2, 1972. Believing this experience to be spiritual conversion, I endeavored to perform worthy religious works. I became a Pentecostalist, ministered diligently with so-called “Jesus People”, and began preaching. I experienced on December 31, 1983, what Pentecostalists call the “baptism of the Holy Ghost”, evidencing also at that time what they call the “gift of speaking in unknown tongues”.

As I studied the Scriptures, I saw the error Pentecostalism, and the invalidity of its

“baptism of the Holy Ghost” and its “gift of speaking in unknown tongues”, and other kindred errors I had embraced. I saw also the logical error a greater false doctrine: freewillism.

I subsequently departed freewillism to become a Calvinist. And I departed Pentecostalism to become a Baptist. I also began attending a religious college, eventually earning a degree in theology.

But I found myself in a most peculiar situation June 17, 1975. For the first time in my life, I was under arrest! The arresting officer was none other than the Holy Spirit of God. He arraigned me to the court of Jehovah’s holy law at Mount Sinai. The Judge asked, “What is the charge against this man?” The Officer answered, “He is a sinner, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”¹ The Judge concurred, and pronounced the sentence against me: “The soul who sins shall die,² for the wages of sin is death.”³

“There must be some mistake,” I cried. “Do you not know that I am a Calvinistic Baptist preacher? Lord, Lord, have I not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?”⁴

The Judge thundered in reply, “I know exactly who and what you are. There is none righteous, no, not one. There is none who seeks after God. There is none who does good, no, not one.”⁵ Depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.”⁶

“This cannot be!” I cried. “I desire to approach the bench!”

The Judge again thundered in reply, “Approach this bench and you will be consumed, for Jehovah your God is a consuming fire.”⁷ Take this sinner to his doom.”

“I appeal Your verdict!” I objected.

But, the Judge yet again thundered in reply, “There is no appeal by the condemned in Jehovah’s court! He makes no mistake! Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?⁸ Take this sinner to his doom.”

I was taken to a far-away state – a state called Conviction. There I was placed in a prison called Despair under the care of a jailer named Justice. Justice was a hard and austere man.

I asked him, “How may I be released from this prison?”

Justice answered, “By one way only: Justice must be satisfied.”

“How may I satisfy Justice?” I wondered.

Justice answered, “Justice will be satisfied with nothing less than the death of the sinner. When you die, justice will be satisfied.”

I had no hope.⁹ My rags of self-righteousness¹⁰ had been stripped away from me, and I saw myself as the vile and wretched sinner I truly was:¹¹ religious – but lost; having a form of godliness but denying its power;¹² claiming to walk in light, but condemned in darkness.¹³

Hearing a noise from the floor above me, I asked Justice what it was. Justice told me that, because of my sins, the Wrath of God abode upon me.¹⁴

“Of what importance is this Wrath of God to me?” I asked.

Justice replied, “The Wrath of God has prepared hell for the devil and his angels,¹⁵ and they will there be joined by all the wicked and unbelievers – people such as yourself.”¹⁶

“What is the nature of this hell Wrath has prepared?” I asked.

Justice replied, “Listen!”

¹ Romans 3:23

² Ezekiel 18:4

³ Romans 6:23

⁴ Matthew 7:22

⁵ Romans 3:10-12

⁶ Matthew 7:23

⁷ Deuteronomy 4:24

⁸ Genesis 18:25

⁹ Ephesians 2:12

¹⁰ Isaiah 64:6

¹¹ Romans 3:13-18

¹² 2 Timothy 3:5

¹³ John 3:18

¹⁴ John 3:36

¹⁵ Matthew 25:41

¹⁶ Revelation 20:10-15

From the deepest and darkest recess of that pit which Wrath has prepared for the damned, I heard the anguished appeal of one who cried, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, for I am tormented in this flame.’”¹⁷

That man’s final end was waiting also for me, for it is in the execution of that condemnation that Justice is satisfied.

One day, the door to my prison opened, and someone entered. His footstep was soft, quite unlike that of Justice. Justice arose, approached the visitor, and asked, “Who comes?”

A voice, sweet and melodious, replied, “My name is Mercy.”

“Mercy,” said Justice, “what brings you to this dismal place?”

“I have come to seek the release of one named Daniel E. Parks.” answered Mercy. “Is he here?”

“Yes, I am here!” I exclaimed. “Justice, Mercy seeks me, so release me!”

“Quiet!” demanded Justice. “I have already told you: No prisoner leaves this prison until Justice is satisfied.” Then to Mercy he asked, “Upon what ground and authority do you seek the release of the condemned man, Daniel Parks?”

“I have found a Ransom!” exclaimed Mercy.¹⁸ “Jesus Christ, his Kinsman, has become also His Redeemer.”

“I’m free! I’m free!” I exclaimed. “Loose these chains and release me!”

“Not yet!” boomed Justice. “I told you before: No prisoner leaves my prison until Justice is satisfied. If indeed you have a kinsman who has redeemed you, you will most certainly be freed. But, Justice must be satisfied beyond any shadow of doubt that this Jesus Christ, whom Mercy declares to be your Kinsman-Redeemer, is qualified to be such.”

“What qualification do you demand?” I asked.

Justice replied, “I must know that Jesus Christ is your Kinsman, truly related to you.”

I looked at Mercy and asked, “Is Jesus Christ indeed my Kinsman?”

Mercy smiled and replied, “He is! Although Jesus Christ is very God of very God, He was born of a woman, born under the law¹⁹ – just as was Daniel Parks. And, even though He is from eternity in the form of God, He made Himself of no reputation – just as is Daniel Parks; and He took upon Him the form of a bondservant – a form like that of Daniel Parks; and He came in the likeness of men – even of the man Daniel Parks.²⁰ Indeed, in order to be your Kinsman, He had to be made like His brethren,²¹ God’s chosen and predestined adopted sons.²² Yes, Daniel Parks, Jesus Christ has manifested Himself as your Brother!”

“Justice!” I exclaimed, “Mercy has declared, upon the authority of God’s infallible word, that Jesus Christ is my Kinsman. Are you satisfied?”

“I am,” answered Justice.

I raised my hands and rattled my chains, and shouted, “I’m free! I’m free!”

“Not yet!” interrupted Justice.

“What do you mean ‘Not yet!’” I demanded. “You just acknowledged that you are satisfied!”

“Yes,” Justice replied, “I am indeed satisfied that Jesus Christ has met the requirement of kinship. But there is yet another qualification: He must be also a free man – free from the condemnation of the law that has enslaved you, because one slave cannot redeem another slave. Only a free man can redeem a slave. I must be satisfied that Jesus Christ is a free man.”

I looked at Mercy and asked, “Is Jesus Christ a free man?”

Mercy smiled and replied, “He is! A divinely inspired writer says He ‘was tempted in all points as we are, yet without sin’.²³ Paul the

¹⁷ Luke 16:24

¹⁸ Job 33:24

¹⁹ Galatians 4:4

²⁰ Philippians 2:7

²¹ Hebrews 2:17

²² Ephesians 1:4f

²³ Hebrews 4:15

lawyer declared ‘He knew no sin.’²⁴ Peter, who intimately fellowshiped with Him for three and a half years, and knew Him as well as was possible, said, ‘He committed no sin, nor was guile found in His mouth.’²⁵ None of His enemies could reply when He asked them, ‘Which of you convicts me of sin?’²⁶ But note well the declaration of the enemy who officiated at His trial: Pontius Pilate, the Roman procurator in Palestine, after hearing every trumped-up charge aimed at Christ by the Jewish Sanhedrin, concluded, ‘I find no fault in this Man!’²⁷ Truly Jesus Christ is a free man – free from the condemnation of the law.”

“Justice!” I exclaimed, “Mercy has declared upon the authority of God’s infallible Word that Jesus Christ is a free man. Are you satisfied?”

“I am,” answered Justice.

Again I raised my hands and rattled my chains, and shouted, “I’m free! I’m free!”

“Not yet!” interrupted Justice. “Jesus Christ has ably fulfilled this second requirement. But there is yet a third: He must be *able* to redeem; He must have the power to do so.”

I looked at Mercy and asked, “Is Jesus Christ able to redeem me?”

Mercy smiled and replied, “He is! He is *completely* able, because ‘He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him.’²⁸ He furthermore is *exceedingly* able, because ‘He is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think.’”²⁹

“Justice!” I exclaimed, “Mercy has declared upon the authority of God’s infallible Word that Jesus Christ is able to redeem me. Are you satisfied?”

“I am,” answered Justice.

Again I raised my hands and rattled my chains, and shouted, “I’m free! I’m free!”

“Not yet!” interrupted Justice. “It is true

that Jesus Christ is *able* to redeem you, but that is of no avail unless He also is *willing* to do so. Justice therefore must be satisfied that Jesus Christ is willing to redeem such a wretched sinner as you are.”

I looked at Mercy and asked, “Is Jesus Christ willing to redeem me?”

Mercy smiled and replied, “He is! Paul the apostle spoke truthfully of all God’s elect when he declared that ‘the Son of God loved me and gave Himself for me.’³⁰ And Jesus Christ Himself truthfully declared, ‘I lay down My life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again.’³¹ And He proved His willingness to redeem Daniel Parks when He willingly hanged on the tree on Calvary as the penal substitute of all God’s elect. All the spikes from all the mines in the earth could not have kept Him suspended to the tree had He chosen to come down. And He could have come down by merely calling for the many legions of angels which were under His command.³² But He did not call for them. Instead, He willingly died to redeem Daniel Parks and all the rest of His brethren.”

“Justice!” I exclaimed, “Mercy has declared upon the authority of God’s infallible Word that Jesus Christ is willing to redeem me. Are you satisfied?”

“I am,” answered Justice.

Again I raised my hands and rattled my chains, and shouted, “I’m free! I’m free!”

“Not yet!” interrupted Justice.

“What do you mean ‘Not yet!’” I demanded. “Will Justice ever be satisfied? You *first* demanded that Jesus Christ be a *kinsman* in order to redeem me; Mercy proved that He is my Brother, the *near-kinsman*. Then you demanded a *second* qualification: He must be a *free* man – free from the condemnation of the law; again Mercy proved, beyond all shadow of

²⁴ 2 Corinthians 5:21

²⁵ 1 Peter 2:22

²⁶ John 8:46

²⁷ Luke 23:4

²⁸ Hebrews 7:25

²⁹ Ephesians 3:20

³⁰ Galatians 2:20

³¹ John 10:17f

³² Matthew 26:53

doubt, that He is indeed the *one and only* free man. Then you demanded a *third* qualification: He must be *able* to redeem me; and Mercy proved, beyond all shadow of doubt, that Jesus Christ is *more than able* to do so. But then you demanded a *fourth* qualification: He must be *willing* to redeem me; and Mercy proved, beyond all shadow of doubt, that Jesus Christ was *lovingly* willing to do so. But all these proofs are apparently to no avail to you, for you seemingly have an infinite number of these qualifications, and you appear to be intent on using them all in the hope of finding one which would disqualify Jesus Christ and thereby seal my doom eternally. What else could you ask of Jesus Christ, my Kinsman, who also would be my Redeemer?"

"Only one more," explained Justice. "There is but one more qualification which Jesus Christ must meet in order to satisfy Justice that He is indeed your Kinsman-Redeemer. If this one last qualification is met, Justice is fully satisfied, and you are fully saved and freed."

I could not contain my anxiety. "What is it?" I anxiously implored.

Justice very somberly replied, "The last qualification is this: If Jesus Christ, your Kinsman, is to be also your Redeemer, He must have the *price* of your redemption."

"What is that price?" I anxiously asked.

Justice replied, "God's Word declares, 'Those who trust in their wealth and boast of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him – for the redemption of their souls is costly.'³³ Therefore, the price of your redemption is far more valuable than all the silver and gold, and all the wealth and riches, to be found in all this earth and world. If Jesus Christ is to pay the price of your redemption, He must offer something more valuable than these."

"Mercy!" I implored, "Justice has truly saved the most difficult qualification for the last. The price for my redemption is more than all the men of this world could provide. Can Jesus

Christ my Kinsman afford and pay such a price?"

Mercy smiled and replied, "He can – and He has! God's Word declares, 'You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.'³⁴

In shock I entreated, "Mercy! What is this you say? Justice demands that the price of my redemption be greater than silver and gold, and wealth and riches – and you have brought ... blood? You expect blood to do what riches cannot?"

Understanding not how blood could be of greater value than silver and gold, and wealth and riches, I threw my arms upward in utter despair. Then, to my utter amazement, I realized that my chains were gone, and that the stocks had been removed, and that the door to my cell was opening, and that Mercy was beckoning, and that Justice was finally smiling – as if he were indeed satisfied. Looking back at the name plate on the door to my cell, I read written across it in red, "Redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ, his Kinsman-Redeemer."

"How can this be true? How can blood redeem me?" I wondered.

Justice answered, "Jesus Christ your Kinsman-Redeemer declares, 'The life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given My blood to you upon the altar to make atonement for your soul; for it is the blood that makes atonement for the soul.'³⁵ By the blood of Jesus Christ, who died vicariously in the place and stead of all God's elect, Justice is satisfied, and all for whom He died are justified.³⁶ They died in His death!"

Mercy took me by the hand and led me out of that prison of Despair in that state of Conviction. I departed its darkness and entered the light of eternal day.

Then and there I saw a sight I had often *sung* and *preached*, but was now *seeing* for the first

³³ Psalm 49:6-8

³⁴ 1 Peter 1:18f

³⁵ Leviticus 17:11

³⁶ Isaiah ch.53

time:

*Up Calv'ry's mountain, one dreadful morn,
Walked Christ my Savior, weary and worn;*

*Facing for sinners death on the cross,
That He might save them from endless loss.*

Then I realized how that ...

*In evil long I took delight,
Unawed by shame or fear,
Till a new object struck my sight,
And stopped my wild career.*

*I saw One hanging on a tree,
In agony and blood,
Who fixed His languid eyes on me,
As near His cross I stood.*

*Sure, never to my latest breath,
Can I forget that look;
It seemed to charge me with His death,
Though not a word He spoke.*

*My conscience felt and owned the guilt,
And plunged me in despair,
I saw my sins His blood had spilt,
And helped to nail Him there.*

But then I heard Him speak:

*Come, ye sinner, poor and wretched,
Weak and wounded, sick and sore;
Jesus ready stands to save you,
Full of pity, joined with power.*

And for the first time I desired His salvation.

Yea, I truly thirsted for it! He then said:

*Come, ye thirsty, come and welcome,
God's free bounty glorify;
Full belief and true repentance –
Every grace that draws you nigh.*

But O! Even though I was weary with my sin, I wondered if there was not at least something I could do to merit my going to Him. He then said:

*Come, ye weary, heavy laden,
Lost and ruined by the fall;
If you tarry till you're better,
You will never come at all.*

But now my conscience smote me: This is all too good to be true! Am I truly fit to go to Him? He then said:

*Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;*

*All the fitness Christ requireth
Is to feel your need of Him.*

I for the first time ever was truly feeling my need of Him. And taking Him at His word, I replied:

*I will arise and go to Jesus;
He will embrace me in His arms;
In the arms of my dear Savior –
O! There are ten thousand charms!*

So I fell at the feet of Jesus Christ. And He said, "Who are you?" So I answered, "I am Daniel Parks, Your servant. Spread your garment over me, and take your servant under your wing, for you are my near kinsman."

He did! He spread His garment of eternal righteousness over me, and placed me under His wing of His divine protection. And my Kinsman became also my Redeemer. He restored to me more than I had lost in my fall in Adam,³⁷ and liberated me,³⁸ and blessed me with an eternal inheritance.³⁹

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O, sinner! Do you see your plight? You, like Ruth and me, were born in "God's washpot", a place of utter contempt. You are religious, but lost. You are serving the gods immoral people made for you, and are estranged from Jehovah the God of Israel. You therefore have no part in the eternal inheritance He has reserved for His people, and are in mortal danger of eternal damnation.

You need redemption. But you cannot purchase it for yourself. Indeed, the more you try to do so, the more you worsen your plight. You need redemption by a kinsman.

I pray God's Spirit may arrest you, and convince you of your guilt, and bring you to despair of yourself in your state of conviction, showing you divine justice you can never satisfy. I pray God will then send His mercy unto you, revealing Christ to you as an able and willing Kinsman, and as the only One with the price of redemption – His own blood. I pray

<sup>37</sup> Romans 5:12ff

<sup>38</sup> Galatians 5:1

<sup>39</sup> Ephesians 1:11; 1 Peter 1:4

you may be given the eye of faith to see Christ on Calvary as your Substitute, and as shedding the blood that completely satisfies divine justice, and thereby justifying all for whom He died.

If God does this for you, flee to Christ, fall prostrate before Him, acknowledge Him as your Kinsman, and He will manifest Himself as your Kinsman-Redeemer. He will forevermore cover and protect you, and give to you an eternal inheritance. He never spurned one who came to Him in this manner.