

Pentwater Bible Church

Isaiah Message 103

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John The Baptist and Herod Antipas by Pieter de Grebber Cir 1640

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The Book of Isaiah

Message One-Hundred-Three

THE LORD OUR REDEEMER

February 28, 2021

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Isaiah 44:6–8

⁶Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God. ⁷And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare. ⁸Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it? and ye are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no Rock; I know not any (ASV, 1901).

In this section of Scripture God makes a several declarations regarding Who He Is and sets out to affirm the several ways that prove that. The first is that He is the King of Israel since He founded them and created them into a Nation leading them through various trials to form them into a nation. He also makes it clear that He has always been in existence when He says the first and the last who is King over Israel. Then the Goel or Redeemer of Israel. He is the head of the Heavenly celestial beings. But as the Goel or Redeemer He has provided special situations for Israel and the Church.

THE GOEL

Isaiah 44:6

⁶Thus saith Jehovah, the King of Israel, and his Redeemer, Jehovah of hosts: I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God (ASV, 1901).

He is Israel's King. The Hebrew word for redeemer is Goel and here God starts off this section of Scripture with the Hebrew word Goel גֹּאֵל a in this instance grammatically it says "and his redeemer." That is before there was a creation God was in existence and after it passes, He will be there also. He uses Hebrew words *rishon* first and *acharon* after or last to express this eternity of Himself. Jesus did the same thing affirming His deity when He said that He was the God of the universe over all creation. In the following instance He used the two Greek letters at both ends of the alphabet to signify the same thing He did here in Isaiah 44:6.

Revelation 1:7–8

⁷ Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen. ⁸ I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty (KJV).

The Old Testament contains important information for us to know in order to truly understand why Christ is the Goel or Redeemer of all mankind. He is the Goel for all believers on earth from the time of Adam and Eve right through into the future when the Great Tribulation begins. What is the Goel? Goel is the Hebrew word for redeemer. The verb form means “to redeem, act as kinsman-redeemer, avenge, revenge, ransom, do the part of a kinsman” (Strong’s Concordance, number 1350). Note the word “kinsman”, it modifies the word “redeemer” as being one in which there is a blood relationship, or one who is tied to the redeemer role in the closest possible way.

Based on Old Testament Law, the Goel as a noun is the one who acts in the role of the kinsman redeemer, and there are three instances where Jesus Christ qualifies as the Goel, and these instances are described in the Old Testament Law (also called the Mosaic Law).

HE IS THE GOEL AS OUR AVENGER OF BLOOD.

Within the Mosaic penal code there was the principle of retribution for murder. It is different than vengeance. Vengeance belongs to God. Vengeance is killing someone because you hate him or her or because they have harmed you in some way. That’s not what God allows. The only thing He allows (in one narrow sense) is if somebody killed a family member, the nearest kinsman that is, a brother could be the avenger of blood and was justified in killing the manslayer in retaliation for their taking the life of one of the immediate family – particularly another brother. For example, under the Mosaic Law, if a male Hebrew had a brother who was killed by another person, the living brother had the legal right to avenge the death by killing the manslayer, but only if it was first degree or premeditated murder.

The Mosaic Law did provide for legal retaliation. Later the Romans called it “Lex Talionis” and it is the legal principle upon which retaliation was justified. Even our legal system has it today, but the individual does not go off and kill somebody. They present the case to our court system which has a systematic way of dealing with the issue. As a believer you could forgive the person, but the manslayer is still responsible for what they did. The Mosaic Law gave the following directions for the kinsman redeemer acting as the avenger of blood:

The willful murderer was to be put to death, without permission or compensation, by the nearest kin of the deceased. In this narrow sense the blood avenger was limited to only killing the manslayer if the crime was first degree, or premeditated murder (Deuteronomy 19:11-13).

The law of retaliation (Lex Talionis) was not to go beyond the immediate offender (II Kings 14:6; II Chronicles 25:4). In other words, there were a lot of things the avenger of blood could not do. For example, he could not go out and kill the manslayer’s family, or he could not steal all the manslayer’s money.

If the individual committed second degree murder, or manslaughter, then he could flee from the blood avenger and take refuge in one of the Cities of Refuge (Numbers 35; Deuteronomy 19:2-9). Note the interesting aspect of that - he could stay there without harm and be protected until the High Priest died. But, if he left before the High Priest died, then he was subject to being killed by the blood avenger if the avenger was still nearby looking for him. When the

High Priest died, then the blood avenger had continued legal protection from the manslayer outside the city of refuge.

There are important parallels to Jesus who is our High Priest, but also our Goel, the avenger of blood. He died so that we can be redeemed from the spiritual (and sometimes physical) death that results from our sins. All sin leads to death, which of us is not guilty of sin? (See Romans 8 for an extensive discussion of why we are saved from death because of our sins by believing in Jesus as our Savior.) Remember, Satan brought sin and death into this world. Satan committed premeditated, first-degree murder by taking both the spiritual and physical life of Adam and Eve, and of every human being born since the Garden of Eden. Adam and Eve would have lived forever if they had not been tempted to sin by Satan. Because Jesus the Son was born as a human baby (which makes Him our brother), He is our kinsman and the avenger of blood for all who believe. He will completely destroy Satan who is the “manslayer of the human race. When Jesus died, if you believe in Him as your Savior, you are released from the death penalty of sin, just like the one who was able to flee to a City of Refuge and then able to go free after the death of the High Priest. So, Jesus Christ fulfills the role of the High Priest and the blood avenger. It’s awesome to see how this works out!

HE IS OUR GOEL IN THE LAW OF LEVIRATE MARRIAGE

Moses gave clear instructions for the Law of Levirate Marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). The idea was to carry on the family line of the individual that died within the nation Israel. Essentially, the Law of the Levirate marriage was this: If a married brother dies with no male offspring, it would be his closest surviving brother’s obligation to marry the deceased’s widow. The widow was unable to go out and marry a stranger. That was against the law. The firstborn son of this union took the surname of the deceased thus continuing the deceased’s name in the family register so that it might not perish out of the nation of Israel. This action labeled the surviving brother as the kinsman redeemer, the first instance of two in which this title is used. (The second use of kinsman redeemer is in regards to redeeming property of a near relative, and will be covered in the next section.)

If a brother did not wish to take his deceased brother’s wife as his own, she had the right to legally cite him for rejecting the marriage before the city elders (the decision makers). This required the woman and the brother-in-law to go to the center of the city square where the city elders were to be found, and the brother-in-law would remove his sandal, which signified that he gave up all claim to the deceased brother’s estate. If he were to marry her, he got the brother’s estate. If he did not carry out the law, she could spit in his face. Spitting in someone’s face was an act of humiliation and it still is today.

We see this Levirate law in action in the story of Judah and Tamar in Genesis chapter 38. In summary this is what happened: Onan was one of Judah’s sons. Onan dies without any children and Tamar his wife comes to her father-in-law Judah and says, “I need a husband.” Judah had one more son who was a youth, and Judah says, “I’ll give him to you when he’s old enough.” And she says, “OK, I’ll wait”, but Judah never gave her that son. So what the Lord did was to bring Tamar to Judah some years later, dressed as a prostitute and enticed him into a sexual relationship. Before she would have intercourse with him, he said, “What do you want for payment?” He does not pay her then but will send the payment later. She

said, “Why don’t you give me your signet ring and your staff in the meantime, until you come back and give me what I am owed.”

Judah agrees to do that, they have intercourse, and Judah returns to his home. But when he sends his friend to find her with the agreed payment, she is not there. Three months later, she is pregnant and the word goes out that Tamar has been having intercourse outside of marriage and she’s now pregnant. Judah is the man of retribution and demands “Who is she to do this? Under the law she needs to be stoned to death.” So, they bring Tamar before him but he doesn’t recognize her as the harlot he had intercourse several months ago. He asks her “How could you do this?” She holds up his jewelry and staff and said she was pregnant “by this man.” Obviously, Judah is not willing to let the situation go any farther, and realizes he was the one who had committed the wrong against her by not following through on his promise to have her married to Onan’s brother. Tamar had twin boys, one of whom was Perez. It was through Perez that the family line was kept flowing through the generations leading to the birth of the Lord Jesus. This subterfuge and dishonesty could have been avoided if Judah honored the law of Levirate marriage. But Judah did not honor the Law, and the Lord intervened to keep the family line alive that would produce our Lord. The Law of Levirate Marriage and how relates to Christ as our redeemer is also explained in the book of Ruth, which is covered in the next section in more detail.

HE IS OUR GOEL AS THE KINSMAN REDEEMER

To redeem means to “buy back”, “to take from”, and “to make right.” In addition to the Goel being the blood avenger, and the redeemer in the Levirate Marriage, Moses also gave the following instructions for the Goel to redeem property of a relative (Leviticus 25:23-28; 48-49). In the case of redeeming property, the redeemer was also called the kinsman redeemer. Land is very important to the Jews, and the Promised Land is extremely important. The property given to the Jews that encompassed the Promised Land was to be their permanent possess because it is God’s permanent possession:

Leviticus 25:23

²³“The land, moreover, shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you [Israel] are but aliens and sojourners with Me (KJV).”

Within the Nation of Israel provision was made for a poor person to sell their property, or himself into slavery for seven years to someone else if they were unable to pay them the debt owed. However, they always had the ability to buy the property or themselves back if they came into enough money to pay the original debt. It’s a different system of real estate than what we have; it’s more like a tenant-leaser relationship. Even within the tribes, if the property was moving from one tribe to another, the original owner never lost it. They held a permanent deed to the property and in essence when they “sold” the property they were getting a “lease-hold” arrangement wherein they were giving up the land for some temporary money. There were specific practices to be followed so this would be worked out (Leviticus 25:50-55). One could sell their property, and ideally if the nearest of kin had the willingness and the ability to buy it back, their nearest of kin could buy it back for them.

Leviticus 25:25

25 "If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. (KJV)"

It is the Goel, the same person that can perform the Levirate marriage, who can take somebody out of slavery and redeem land. In this case, the kinsman redeemer was essentially a rich benefactor. If a family member was forced into slavery, his redeemer purchased his freedom. When debt threatened to overwhelm him, the kinsman stepped in to redeem the family member's homestead and let the family live.

In terms of redeeming land, there were specific instructions to be followed to determine the cost paid by the redeemer. The redeemer did not pay more than the original price, and the number of years that the property had been in the possession of other person was taken off the redeeming price to determine the value of the property. In the case of family members selling themselves into slavery to pay off a debt, the price was affected by the remaining years left of the original seven years of indenture. Usury or interest was not to be charged amongst the Jews at all. At the end of seven 7-year cycles (7x7=49 years), the fiftieth year is called the Jubilee Year, and all land went back to the original tribe that owned it, no matter what was owed at this time.

We see the concept of the Kinsman-Redeemer or Goel acted out in the book of Ruth. Elimelech, was a Jewish man who sold his land and moved his wife, Naomi, and their two sons to Moab to live since there was an extreme famine in the land of Israel. In Moab both of his sons married a gentile woman, and one of them was named Ruth. Jewish men were not to marry out of the faith but this story has a purpose. In time, Elimelech, and both his sons died. Naomi and her daughter's-in-laws had lost their husbands, and now they were all widows. Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to return to their families in Moab, however Ruth wants to stay with her because she loves Naomi and does not want to leave her. Ruth tells Naomi:

Ruth 1:16-17

16 "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. 17 "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 (KJV)."

Naomi had become bitter over her situation, and decides to return to Israel since the famine had abated, and Ruth goes with her. They travel back to the Bethlehem, the hometown of Naomi and her husband. Ruth meets Boaz, a relative of Naomi's husband while gleaning grain in his field. She tells Naomi of the kindness Boaz had shown her. Naomi realizes a union with Boaz is a way for Ruth to have a family and be happy. She also knows of the kinsman redeemer directions in the Mosaic Law. So, she instructed Ruth in what to do, and how-to set-in motion the kinsman redeemer

responsibility to activate the Goel's responsibility to redeem her dead husband's land and marry Ruth. Ruth does as Naomi instructed, and Boaz is receptive to the idea but realizes there is another man who is closer kin than Boaz to Naomi's dead husband, Elimelech. Boaz approaches this relative about redeeming the land for Naomi. The relative agreed to buy the land back until he found out that Ruth, a Gentile woman he would also have to marry, came with the package. In Israel, that was forbidden – the Jews did not marry Gentiles. If they did, there was going to be a lot of problems for them socially. They were going to be outcasts unless that person converted. It still would be a tough marriage because the Jews would always view them as being an “outsider” even if they converted. The nearer kinsman backs out, because he felt this redemption was going to harm his inheritance, and agrees to let Boaz assume the kinsman redeemer role for the family of Elimelech. Boaz now becomes the nearest of kin and he has the privilege of redeeming Naomi's land and Ruth with it. So, he marries Ruth and he takes the land.

In summary, Boaz was nearest of kin to her deceased husband (Ruth 2:1). He was able to redeem by paying the price of redemption (Ruth 2:1), and he was willing to redeem the land (Ruth 4:4). Boaz was to become the kinsman redeemer, or the Goel. It's a beautiful love story too, but the central thread through this is showing us the role of the kinsman redeemer. Boaz, whose name is on one of the pillars of the Temple, became foundational in the family line that would bring the Lord Jesus Christ's body into the world. That is what makes this story so beautiful. This story is a picture of the Christ and His Church.

What did Christ do? The Church is the Gentile Bride of Christ. He brought the Gentiles into the Church. Christ is a Jew. The Jews and the Gentiles are one in the Church. Christ is our Goel, our Kinsman Redeemer.

THERE IS NO OTHER GOD

Isaiah 44:7–8

⁷And who, as I, shall call, and shall declare it, and set it in order for me, since I established the ancient people? and the things that are coming, and that shall come to pass, let them declare. ⁸Fear ye not, neither be afraid: have I not declared unto thee of old, and showed it? and ye are my witnesses. Is there a God besides me? yea, there is no Rock; I know not any (ASV, 1901).

To demonstrate that the Lord alone is the only true God, a challenge is offered for any so-called god to stand in contest with Him. The introductory words, *And who like me will call?* Is equivalent to saying, “If there is anyone like me, let him call, etc.” Others may say things, but they cannot prophesy with respect to the future nor can they tell of the previous events in history. Nor can they “make known,” in the sense of explaining in advance or causing the course of things to come. Nor can they prepare and arrange events so as to cause them to happen. The gods cannot present their case before the true God.

God alone foretells future events that shall come to pass, and which accordingly always do; but the idols of the Gentiles can do nothing of this kind. *The ancient people* meaning the ancient patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and their posterity, the children of Israel, who were early formed into a body politic, and into a church-state as well as back to the first man, and the first

race of men that inhabited the world before the flood, called the old world. He makes this declaration to give the sense that, no one ever did the things He has done, from the time of the Creation to include human, and other creatures, and placed them on the earth.

Since God is the first and the last and there is no God beside Him, the people are instructed not to fear. The object of fear is not stated, but it would seem to be whatever fears people might have to destroy the nation's confidence in its God are to be ignored.

The people that first heard God's message through Isaiah knew about past prophecies from their history, and they were witnesses to the truth that God proclaimed. Because of an absence of comparable claims by other gods and God's many true prophetic announcements center on the question He asks, "*Is there any other God besides me?*" Can any of these other gods do what I do? The answer is obvious and expressed in the following manner. "There is no (other) Rock, I know not (one)." The imagery of God as a rock creates images of a solid foundation that is an immovable source of protection and an impregnable solid foundation (Deuteronomy 32:4, 15, 18, 30, 37; 1 Samuel 2:2; Psalm 18:31). Rocks provide security, deliverance from attack, and a hiding place; rocks do not change. Since God does not know of any other being who has the stature, knowledge, power, temporal control over all history, and the leadership of the heavenly armies, we can be assured that our God is the only one who deserves our trust.

Next message GOD JUDGES THE IDOLATERS

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