

Lesson 1 – CHRIST, OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER Ruth 1:1

(1:1) “Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled” – The story of Ruth is a true story that took place in Israel during the time of the Judges. It is named after a Gentile woman (a Moabite), Ruth, who moved from Moab to Israel, the city of Bethlehem, with her mother-in-law, Naomi, and married an Israelite named Boaz. This book, like all Old Testament Scriptures, ultimately speaks of CHRIST OUR KINSMAN-REDEEMER and our redemption in and by Him. The key word, used repeatedly is “KINSMAN.” In **Ruth 3:9**, upon meeting Ruth for the first time, Boaz, the man who was to become her husband and redeemer, asked Ruth, **“Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a NEAR KINSMAN”** (cf. **2:1,20; 3:12; 4:6,14**).

The law of the kinsman-redeemer was part of God’s wise provision for Israel to retain their positions in the land of promise and not lose the land due to their sinfulness. God knew the sinfulness, depravity, and weakness of the people. He knew that, left up to them, they would lose or sell the land away. It was God’s purpose for them to retain that land until the time of the Messiah. So, He gave them the law of the kinsman-redeemer in **Leviticus 25:23-25** – **“(23) The land shall not be sold for ever: FOR THE LAND IS MINE; for ye are strangers and sojourners with Me. (24) And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. (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.”**

This law was also prophetic and provided a beautiful picture (type) of the Lord Jesus Christ in the beauty of His Person and the power and success of His work of redemption to insure the eternal salvation and final glory of all of God’s chosen people given to Christ before the world began. The “kinsman” typifies Christ’s Person as both God and man in one glorious Person. Having been made flesh without sin, He became our “near kinsman” to live, suffer, and die for our sins imputed to Him (**Heb. 2:14-18**). As our “near kinsman, Christ was, and is, able to perform and complete His work as our Surety, Substitute, Redeemer, and Mediator.

The “redeemer” typifies Christ’s successful work to pay the debt of our sins to God’s law and justice in full and bring about a complete redemption from sin that insures the salvation and final glory of all for whom He lived, died, was buried, and arose again, all for whom He now sits at the right hand of God the Father ever living to make intercession for us (**Rom. 8:33-35**). As our kinsman-redeemer, Christ paid the ransom and delivered us from eternal damnation (**Job 33:24; Matt. 20:28**). As our Kinsman-Redeemer, Christ brought forth the perfect righteousness that God has imputed to all His people and which is more than enough for us to stand before Holy God as justified saints, accepted forever in Christ.

As we go through this brief historical book of God's inerrant and inspired Word, we will see many, many typical references of the glory of God in Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer, of our fall into sin and spiritual famine as well as our sinful state in this world, and of the glory of redemption by God's grace through the Person and work of Christ. Consider the following –

“Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled that there was a famine in the land.” – The time of the Judges was a time of great sin and rebellion in Israel – **“In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right in his own eye” (Jdg. 21:25)**. Israel's possession of the land was unconditional, but their prosperity in the land was conditioned on their obedience to the Law. They proved time and time again that they were a sinful people and were oftentimes under the plague of famine and oppression from foreign enemies. This is a picture of the fall of mankind in Adam and the sinfulness that exists in all people (**Rom. 3:23; 5:12**). Man is by nature spiritually dead, depraved, blind, and unwilling to seek the true and living God (**Rom. 3:10-20**). He cannot redeem, save, or raise himself from this spiritual death. This is why God's way of salvation is by His free and sovereign grace in and by the Lord Jesus Christ, our Kinsman-Redeemer.

“And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.” – Bethlehemjudah is the same as Bethlehem, the place of the Savior's birth. It means “house of bread.” But because there was a famine in the land, rather than follow God's commandment and trust in Him, this man took his family and traveled to Moab, a heathen, idolatrous, and cursed land. This is an example of man doing what is right in his own eyes rather than following what is right in God's eyes. We see this so much in false religion. The natural man seeks salvation his own way by his works and his will and not by God's way revealed in God's Word, the Gospel of His grace in Christ Jesus. The Law given to Israel by God through Moses was given to them to show them the utter impossibility of redemption, salvation, conditioned on their efforts to obey the law. The law could never justify them or give spiritual life. Righteousness, forgiveness, and life could only come from the Lord God through His Son incarnate, the Kinsman- Redeemer of His chosen people. Eternal salvation and blessedness can only come through the righteousness of Christ!