

**The Levir, the Goel, and the Redeemer**  
**Ruth 2:17-23**  
**January 27, 2008**

- I. Review of Ruth 1 and 2
  - A. Covenant context
    1. two basic promises of the covenant
      - a. seed (Gen. 1:28)
      - b. land (Gen. 13:14-15)
    2. call to repentance and covenant faithfulness
  - B. The place of our main characters in this story of the covenant
    1. Elimelech – the faithless husband
      - a. the time of the judges  
*Judges 21:25* <sup>25</sup> *In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.*
      - b. the situation – famine in the land
      - c. the solution – repentance or Moab?
      - d. the result – no seed, no land
    2. Naomi – the frustrated wife
      - a. understandable frustration
        - i. “I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty.” v. 21
        - ii. in some sense, outside the covenant
      - b. but remember God’s faithfulness
        - i. the LORD had visited his people and given them food (1:6)
        - ii. and they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest (1:22)
      - c. return to Bethlehem → repentance (this word used twelve times in chapter 1)
    3. Ruth – the blessed foreigner
      - a. daughter of Moab
      - b. miraculous conversion – everything pushing toward Moab
        - i. no seed and no prospect of seed (vv. 11-13)
        - ii. the temptation of home (v. 8)
        - iii. takes refuge with the Lord (vv. 16-17; 2:12)
      - c. example of covenant faithfulness  
*Matthew 10:37-39* <sup>37</sup> *Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.* <sup>38</sup> *And whoever does not take his cross and follow me is not worthy of me.* <sup>39</sup> *Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.*
    4. Boaz – the faithful husband
      - a. our story’s first turning point (1:22)
      - b. God provides a gracious system – gleaning laws
      - c. God provides a gracious deliverer (2:1-3)
        - a. he provides for Ruth and Naomi above and beyond the provisions of the law (2:14-16)  
Atkinson: “For him the law gives guidance for living as a person within the covenant family of God. But, for him, law is not a legal code only . . . God’s torah is guidance in loving.” 107
        - b. in the process, he becomes the answer to his own prayer (2:12)

## II. Boaz: the Lord's redeemer

### A. The central turning point of the story → 2:20

1. Boaz – a relative of Elimelech (2:1)
2. Naomi's response to Boaz (v. 20)
3. Pessimism → joy

### B. The laws for the goel or redeemer (esp. Lev. 25)

1. avenge the blood of a murdered relative (Num. 35:16ff)
2. restitution for the sins of a relative (Num. 5:8)
3. deliver a relative from slavery (Lev. 25:47-49)
4. redeem the property of a relative (Lev. 25:25-28)
  - a. the land is mine (v. 23a)
  - b. you are sojourners with me (v. 23b)

### C. Key aspects of the role of goel

1. covenantal importance of land (see 4:9)
2. remember God, the Redeemer of Israel

*Exodus 6:6-8* <sup>6</sup> Say therefore to the people of Israel, 'I am the LORD, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. <sup>7</sup> I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the LORD your God, who has brought you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians. <sup>8</sup> I will bring you into the land that I swore to give to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob. I will give it to you for a possession. I am the LORD.'"

3. bought with a price (Isa. 43:3-4; 52:10)

### D. The laws of the levir (Deut. 25:5-10)

1. who? Brothers who dwell together
2. what? Bring forth his brother's son
3. why? that his name may not be blotted out of Israel
4. the obligation to fulfill this redemptive role (vv. 7-10)

### E. Boaz's generosity as the levir for Ruth and Naomi

1. not a brother who dwelled with Elimelech – only a relative
2. willing to pay the steep price – not only for the land, but to marry Ruth and produce a seed (see 4:13-17)
3. Boaz becomes the faithful husband
  - a. in contrast to Elimelech
  - b. in contrast to Judah (Gen. 38)

## III. Application

### A. God's sovereign plan of salvation

1. Genesis 3:15
2. the seed will not be stamped out
  - a. Judah and Tamar
  - b. Boaz and Ruth
3. in fact, see some basic patterns of redemptive history in this story
  - a. the scorned woman – foreigner, harlot, adulterer, virgin
  - b. the second husband – Jacob, Perez, Boaz, second Adam

### B. The price of redemption

1. the price Boaz was willing to pay (4:6)
2. the price your Savior was willing to pay

### C. God's extraordinary providence displayed in ordinary, everyday life