

Ruth: Kinsman-Redeemer

Read Leviticus 25:23-28, 48-55

Before we get back to the story of Ruth, let's take a closer look at the term "kinsman-redeemer" in Ruth 2:20. It refers to a relative who redeems his kin from difficulty or danger. Then, as now, family was an important part of God's gracious provision for our needs.

The duties and privileges of a kinsman-redeemer included:

- Repurchasing lost property that a family member had sold in time of need (Leviticus 25:23-28)
- Freeing a relative who had sold himself into slavery in a time of need (Leviticus 25:48-55)
- Avenging the life of a murdered relative. In that society, the kinsman-redeemer had the responsibility of killing the murderer of his murdered relative, exacting a life for a life, in essence "buying back" that life (Numbers 35:6-34).

A separate Old Testament law (Deuteronomy 25:5-10) says that when brothers are living together, a childless widow of one brother should be taken as a wife by her late husband's brother. That brother should then give her children in the name of his late brother, in order to insure the family succession. This marriage law became tied up with the kinsman-redeemer laws in the story of Ruth.

Thus the kinsman-redeemer was one who put his own life and property on the line for a needy relative. Throughout the Psalms and the prophets, God speaks of Himself as such a Redeemer for His people. When we are in need, He steps into the gap to deliver, avenge, and provide for us. God as our Redeemer becomes fully personified in Jesus Christ. When we were helpless, He came to earth to redeem us, to buy us back from slavery, to vindicate and provide for us, to claim us as His own family, and indeed, to take us as His own bride.

Job spoke for all God's people when, in the grip of his many trials, he proclaimed his faith that God would act as his Redeemer and deliver him from death:

*I know that my Redeemer lives,
And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.
Even after my skin is destroyed,
Yet from my flesh I shall see God. (Job 19:25-26, NASB)*

Listen & Sing: [I Know That My Redeemer Lives](#) (from [LNWhymns.com](#))