

DEVOTIONAL STUDIES OF OLD TESTAMENT TYPES

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CHAPTER EIGHT

Naomi, A Type of the Returning Backslider (Ruth 1-3)

Naomi and her husband left the land of Israel for the land of Moab; and sometimes Christians backslide by going back into the world. “Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons” (Ruth 1:1). Naomi and her husband mortgaged their home and moved to Moab because of the famine. They stayed there longer than they intended to stay. They “went to sojourn in the country of Moab.” Then they “continued there” (v. 2). And finally they “dwelled there about ten years” (v. 4). They stayed there long enough for their two sons to marry Moabitish women.

The experience of Naomi is similar to that of backsliders today. These people forsake God’s house and His people and go back to the world. **“Demas hath forsaken me, having loved this present world”** (II Timothy 4:10). Such a life begins by excursions into the world with the purpose in mind of returning to the Lord. But the time lengthens out into years, and involvements preclude an early restoration, especially if an unsaved person is married in the meantime. How easy it is for hearts to be hardened!

“Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God. But exhort one another daily, while it is called Today; lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin” (Hebrews 3:12, 13).

Troubles in the land of Moab caused Naomi to return to Israel, and oftentimes the Lord uses trouble to bring backsliders to Him. “And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons . . . And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband” (Ruth 1:3, 5). To lose first her husband, and then her two sons, one after another, must have been terrible blows to Naomi, but doubtless it was all this that caused her to return to her own land. “Then she arose . . . that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread” (v. 6).

Naomi was now willing to return to Bethlehem. And today God allows severe trials to come to backsliders to make them think of God. **“I will go and return to my place, till they acknowledge their offense, and seek my face: in their affliction they will seek me early. Come, and let us return unto the Lord”** (Hosea 5:15-6:1).

Naomi’s return to the land of Israel caused Ruth to go with her; and backsliders who now return to the Lord often lead others to Christ. **“And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God”** (Ruth 1:16).

When a backslider returns to the Lord, then his influence begins to count for God instead of against Him. After David’s great sin, when he confessed his sin to the Lord and was forgiven and restored to the Lord, then he could be influential in converting sinners to God. **“Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free Spirit, then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be converted unto thee”** (Psalm 51:12, 13).

Naomi and Ruth were blessed of God upon their return to the land of Israel; and God will bless all those who return unto Him. The Lord graciously blessed them following their return to the land. What Boaz said of Ruth was true of Naomi also, **“Blessed be thou of the Lord”** (Ruth 3:10). The lost inheritance was restored through Boaz as kinsman-redeemer. And God always blesses the returning backslider. **“Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts: and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon”** (Isaiah 55:7).

Boaz,
A Type of Christ as Our Kinsman-Redeemer
(Ruth 1-4)

The family of Elimelech needed a kinsman-redeemer; even as men through the years have needed a spiritual Kinsman-redeemer. When Elimelech and Naomi forsook the land of Israel for Moab, they mortgaged their property and home (Ruth 1). Then in the foreign land their two sons both died without sons. Thus their property would have been lost but for the help of a kinsman-redeemer.

A kinsman-redeemer was a brother or the nearest male relative. He would pay the mortgage on the property and be expected to marry the widow of the deceased man and thus raise up the name of the deceased. In this case, there was a kinsman nearer than Boaz, but he refused to act as redeemer, so this left the way open for Boaz to be the kinsman-redeemer. He paid the mortgage on the estate of Elimelech and married Ruth, the wife of Elimelech’s deceased son, and thus the house of Elimelech was redeemed when Ruth bare a son to Boaz.

When Adam and Eve sinned, they and all their descendants lost their inheritance in God’s kingdom. **“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned”** (Romans 5:12). The inheritance was lost through sin.

“Know ye not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God?” (I Corinthians 6:9). Because of this loss, man has desperate need of a kinsman-redeemer to redeem his lost inheritance.

Boaz is a type of Christ as kinsman-redeemer because he was near of kin, and thus had the right to redeem. “And now is not Boaz of our kindred?” (Ruth 3:2). Boaz had the right to redeem because he was near of kin. Jesus is a Brother to those He redeems, being a real human being, **“For which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren”** (Hebrews 2:11). **“For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people”** (Hebrews 2:16, 17). Because the Son of man was a genuine human being, He has the right to redeem for man his lost inheritance, being near of kin.

As kinsman-redeemer Boaz is a type of Christ, because he was able to redeem, being wealthy. “And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz” (Ruth 2:1). Being wealthy, there was no question about the ability of Boaz to pay off the mortgage on the estate of Elimelech. He could well afford to do it. And being Son of God with all power, Jesus had the ability to redeem sinners. **“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God”** (Hebrews 4:14).

Our Kinsman-Redeemer must be Man and He must be God.

- Because He is Man, He has the right to redeem.
- Because He is God, He has the ability to redeem.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20). Actually, Jesus bought us by the price of His blood, **“For ye are bought with a price”** (I Corinthians 6:20).

As kinsman-redeemer Boaz is a type of Christ because he was willing to redeem. “And the kinsman [not Boaz] said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself” (Ruth 4:6).

You see, this other kinsman was not willing to redeem the inheritance by marrying Ruth, whereas Boaz was so willing. **“Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s”** (Ruth 4:9). His marriage to Ruth was a necessary part of his redemption of the property. And Jesus was willing to redeem sinful man and thus win back for him his lost inheritance.

“Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:5-8).

Here we see the willingness of Jesus to turn His back on the glories of Heaven in order to come to earth to redeem man by dying on Calvary's cross.

*As kinsman-redeemer Boaz is a type of Christ because he loved the one redeemed. **"Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance"** (Ruth 4:10).*

Boaz was willing to be Ruth's redeemer because he loved her and was willing to marry her. And because Jesus loves us, He died for us and thereby became our Redeemer. **"Who loved me, and gave himself for me"** (Galatians 2:20). **"Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God"** (Romans 7:4).

The redemption which Christ secures for us is far superior to that which Boaz secured for the family of Elimelech. **"Hath not God chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?"** (James 2:5).

Jesus Christ, the antitype, is far greater than Boaz, the type. Therefore, the inheritance of Christ is greater than the inheritance of Boaz. How we should thank God for Jesus, our Kinsman-Redeemer!

~ end of chapter 8 ~

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