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#### CHAPTER FOUR

### THE PECULIAR ROLE OF THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER *Please Read: Leviticus 25: 47-49*

"And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother that dwelleth by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family: after that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him; either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him; or if he be able, he may redeem himself." -Leviticus 25:47-49.

Two of the Synoptic Gospel writers give us as the last uttered statement from the lips of the Son of God, an inarticulate scream that not only rent the darkness that enveloped the Hill of Calvary, but simultaneous with that scream, the veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

John, who stood with the mother of Jesus in the very shadow of the cross throughout the ghastly ordeal, makes no mention of this unintelligible scream, but gives as the last statement the victory cry, "It is finished!"

The rent veil, the bursting rocks, the convulsion of the earth,

the excited precautions of the high priests in sealing the tomb, not to mention the repeated predictions of Christ, Himself, add repeated testimony that Calvary was not the end, but rather a beginning.

Christ died as a victim at the hands of God, as a martyr at the hand of man, and a willing love slave choosing His own hour and manner of execution. His death was only the completion of the basic phase of the scheme of Redemption.

Scourged until His own blood marked a crimsoned path up Calvary's Hill, nailed fast to the tree until His entire body quivered in agony, scorched by the merciless heat of the sun which He Himself had hung in the heavens, bleeding until His heart had no more blood to send coursing through His tortured veins, He died.

Through this eternity of agony, He became our Burnt Offering, presenting Himself without spot to God. He became our Meat Offering, having overcome every human weakness through thirty-three years, clothed in human flesh, with the final verdict, "I find no fault in him."

He was our Peace Offering, signing an eternal armistice with an offended God, securing our peace forever. He was our Trespass Offering, forgiving every trespass, large and small, premeditated or committed ignorantly. He was our Sin Offering, bearing our sin in His own body on the tree, nailing our sins to His cross.

He was the bullock that made our atonement. He was, at once, the goat that died at the altar steps, and the scapegoat sprinkled with the blood of the dead victim, carried away into the wilderness, never to return again. He was, at once, the dove fluttering in death as its neck was wrung for the sins of the people, and the dove sailing into the far vaults of the blue, stained with blood, bearing the sins of the people far away.

He was the Passover Lamb in Egypt, dying that a nation might live. It was His blood in a figure that made the sign of the cross on the door post of the Israelite hut in far-away Goshen, beneath which two million slaves marched out to freedom.

Just as the multicolored rainbow stretches its dazzling arch across the sky with neither beginning nor end, thus the fountain of Redemption gushes forth from the cross in ten thousand tributaries of grace that shall never end.

In the cross we had every question answered, every demand met, every need supplied, every hope secured, every battle won, every promise sustained. Yet, if that had climaxed the function of Christ's mission to men, it would have been a blunder even surpassing the tragedy of the Fall.

It is agreed that Christ came into the world with the marks of death upon Him. The very shadow of the cross hung low over His manger bed. With a directness and precision that could complement the calculations of a divine mind, Jesus moved steadily, unerringly, unswervingly through every experience of His life onward toward Calvary. His battle cry was "Calvary." His insignia was a cross; His theme was His Father's will. A victim? Yes! A martyr? Yes! A lamb led to the slaughter? Yes! He not only freed the human family from the slavery of sin, but he emancipated the dumb brute of flock and herd, who for thousands of years had gone bleating and groaning to give their blood as a temporary covering for Man's sin.

Christ came into the world to perform a priestly function. The records of all religions, dating backward into the dim twilight of time, give accumulated evidence of priestly service. One of the mystic and mysterious characters of holy history is that of magnificent Melchizedek. Who was he? Where did he come from? Who made him a priest? He had no predecessors. There was no posterity like him. He was so great even Abraham paid tithes to him. He was unique in his appointment and in his relation to God and man.

Jesus Christ was not born of priestly descent. He was not of the tribe of Levi. He was not of the posterity of Aaron; but at the appointed time, God, Himself, anointed Him for His priestly function and declared, "Thou art a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek."

Thus, we come to that unprecedented paradox where Jesus Christ is victim and priest at once. Shedding His blood to make atonement, at the same time He arose from the ashes of the Burnt Offering to catch His own precious blood, sprinkle it before the mercy seat, and present it in person before the Throne of God.

The many intricacies of the Jewish ritual and worship from the first sacrifice to the proverbial jubilee sets forth Redemption in all of its aspects. "From Eden to Calvary, blood flowed; and from Calvary to the consummation, blood will be applied."

The actual implementation of the provisions of Calvary is of course the responsibility of our Redeemer and He is seen not stintingly or grudgingly carrying out His work, but eagerly He performs it.

#### THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER'S UNIQUE RESPONSIBILITY

Possibly, the most beautiful aspect of the work of Christ is His role as Kinsman-Redeemer. The text of this lesson describes a sorrowful supposition. It suggests that in the course of events, adversity would overtake an Israelite, a father and husband. Poverty would abound and debt would be incurred to the point that he would have to sell himself, his family, and his inheritance to his creditors. He would be sold at public auction into slavery and servitude. His freedom would be gone, his liberty lost, and life would be robbed of all its joys.

Strange as it may seem, the law was on the side of the creditor. The poor man was helpless. Though this was a matter of law and seemed cruel, yet there was a provision for his ransom. If he had a rich kinsman, it was the kinsman's privilege to assume the role of kinsman-redeemer for the poor man and pay the ransom for his release and restoration.

The parallel is so obvious in this unfortunate situation that it will probably be unnecessary to do more than merely mention it. The universal calamity of the human race is that they had the misfortune to lose their heritage and holiness in Adam, and became bound in chains of bondage with nothing to pay their ransom. But into this bleak and barren wasteland came one who was able to redeem. We now consider the subject of Redemption in connection with the person of the Redeemer under God's program.

1. He must be a *near* Kinsman.
2. He must be *willing* to perform His work of redemption.
3. He must have the *ability* to redeem.
4. The Redeemer must be *free* Himself.
5. He must have the *price* of redemption.
6. He must, if necessary, avenge the person redeemed.

Gesenius gives three meanings for the root word which defines the different aspects of redemption:

- a. To redeem, to buy back. The simple thought is to purchase by paying a price for that which was lost for some reason.

- b. To require blood; that is, to avenge blood. This had reference to someone who was near of kin, as only such a one would seek vengeance.

- c. Since both the right of redemption and the office of avenging bloodshed belonged to the nearest kinsman, this Hebrew word denotes near of kin, near relative.

Christ is Saviour, substitute, servant, King. In Matthew, He is the King; in Mark, He is the servant; in Luke, He is the man; in John, He is God; but in none of His functions and relationships is He more glorious and precious than in the role as Kinsman-Redeemer.

Before we deal with the legal aspects of our Benefactor, let us consider the conditions under which we were bound. Down through the years a concept has become pretty well crystallized in the minds of some to the effect that Satan has some claim on man; that in paying the penalty for sin on the cross, Christ in some way had to satisfy or force some sort of settlement with Satan. We have heard it said that Satan holds a mortgage over our souls and Christ had to go on man's bond and pay Satan off that we might be free. There is nothing further from the truth than this line of reasoning.

The Devil at no time has held any legitimate claim over man. In no way and at no time did Christ have to come to terms with Satan. The Devil, from first to last, is a usurper, trying to claim property that does not belong to him. He is a claim jumper. He tried to move landmarks. He forged his name on false papers claiming an inheritance that will not hold up in the courts of Divine Justice.

A little while ago, I was walking over some real estate with my brother-in-law, some land which he had recently purchased. We came to a spot which he said was a corner post. As he probed around in the bushes to find the corner, I asked him how he knew there was a corner near. He pointed to an old gnarled and twisted, weather beaten tree and said, "That tree has witness marks on it." There were several other trees similarly marked that he said were witnesses. The cornerstone was hidden and hard to find, but the witnesses were proof that it was there.

We must have papers witnessed and probated to make them valid. Satan may claim to have papers, but they are false. Satan has no witnesses to his seal, and his papers have never

been probated. It is true that Satan led man into sin, and the sinner is sold under sin, taken captive by him at his will; but the idea that Satan has a legitimate claim on the sinner is false. By false claim, he will put his stamp in the forehead of many people, but only after they have refused to be redeemed.

The Devil forced man into disobedience to God, and the act of disobedience caused man to run afoul of God's divine law, throwing him into a state of disrepute with God. This brought the laws of God's divine justice and holiness into force, and as far as man was concerned, he forfeited his freedom, his property, and his life. Satan's primary concern was not just to destroy man, or force man to destroy himself, but to strike at the heart of God through the apple of God's eye.

Therefore, Satan does not enter into the terms of the transaction of the Kinsman-Redeemer. God is the creditor. He is holding in trust the title deed to the inheritance, and the rights and privileges of life and liberty and happiness, awaiting the coming of the rich, Royal Kinsman who will pay the price, release the victim, and restore him to his lost heritage.

In the study of this subject, I was amazed with the briefness of Scripture references to the role and work of the Kinsman-Redeemer. There is, of course, enough to establish it as a vital part of Christ's work. We must not overlook the fact that an entire book of the Bible is given to the practical application of the intricate details of this principle.

#### ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION

The Book of Ruth is a brochure of beauty, shining like a priceless gem against a black background of political decay, moral degradation, and spiritual degeneration. This classic love story, unsurpassed in human literature, is a bouquet of beauty in sharp contrast to one of the darkest days of Israelite history: the period of the Judges.

Among the many applications of truth contained in this book is the establishment of the fact that the legal aspect of Redemption performed by the Kinsman-Redeemer was not simply a cold-blooded business deal, performed only as a relative required by law; but that it was a love affair, with a warm personal element that we cannot overlook in the doctrine of Redemption. The circumstances surrounding the main characters in this

book created an opportunity for the expression of deep devotion, and records a transaction throbbing with tenderness. All of the noblest virtues known to man shine with burning brilliance through the chief characters of this book: the honor of manhood, the virtue of womanhood, the daring of duty, the faithfulness of friendship, the ways of love, and the ultimate triumph of truth.

*The first requisite, then, was that our Redeemer must be "near of kin."*

There is no problem here. The opening utterance at Eden's gate, promising a Redeemer, established forever the earthly kinship of the Son of God. He shall be the seed of the woman. Around this theme revolves the tenderest sentiment, the sweetest music, the dearest image in the mind of man. In the mysterious Incarnation, the miracle was performed that made the child of the manger a near kinsman to Adam's fallen race.

Born of a virgin, nourished by the milk from Mary's breast, circumcised the eighth day, taught the carpenter's trade by His foster father, tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin; unmistakably established in the record books of eternity that He is a near kinsman in the flesh.

*The Kinsman-Redeemer must be willing to perform his work of redemption.* In the case of Boaz, there was another who was nearer of kin to the husband of the Moabite widow than was he. This nearer kinsman's attention was called to the situation, and he was at first willing and able to redeem the inheritance; but upon being told that along with the material inheritance, he must assume the obligations of the law respecting Ruth, he refused. His refusal was on the grounds that it would impair his own inheritance. He qualified on the first count, but on the second, he was disqualified. He was not willing to assume the full duties of a kinsman-redeemer.

It then fell to Boaz, and strange as it seems, the very thing that was objectionable to the would-be redeemer was the one thing that held the highest interest of Boaz, and thrilled him with eagerness to redeem the heritage.

Jesus Christ was not only willing to redeem man; He leaped joyously to the task. There was an urgency, an eagerness, a haste in everything that He did. To John the Baptist He said, "Suffer it to be so now." To His parents He said, "I must be about my Father's business." To the disciples He said, "I must

work the works of him that sent me, while it is day; the night cometh. . ." Walking through the city of Sychar, they saw His face set toward Jerusalem. To the sleeping trio in Gethsemane, He said, "Rise up, let us go."

From first to last, Christ, in the role of the Kinsman-Redeemer, is a love story of One who did not count the cost nor figure up the profit and loss; but for the joy that was set before Him, paid an exorbitant price for those whom He loved.

*The Kinsman-Redeemer must have the ability to redeem.* The strong man, Boaz, considered not the risk of impairment to his own inheritance, but declared to the judges in the gate that he was able to redeem. By every right, he was able. The measure of his greatness was documented in that he met every demand of the law.

*The Lion of the Tribe of Judah is able to redeem.* Isaiah in his prophecy described His greatness: "Who is this that cometh from Edom, with dyed garments from Bozrah? this that is glorious in his apparel, traveling in the greatness of his strength? I that speak in righteousness, mighty to save." Again, in Christ's own words, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The Book of Hebrews sets forth the unlimited bounds of His power as the Kinsman-Redeemer. "Wherefore, He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them."

Christ must be able to redeem, not only by proof of kinship to the victim, but He must, in His own inalienable right, have access to the Creditor, or the one who holds forfeiture in His hand. As Job so eloquently stated it, He must be more than a man. He must be a Daysman who can lay His hand upon us both.

In the case of Ruth, she was a foreigner; the law kept her out. (Deut. 23:3) But Boaz used his ability as a redeemer to redeem her from the power of the law. She was a stranger, far removed from the privileges of God's people. She was unable to extricate herself from the meshes of the law; but a mighty man of wealth paid the price and brought her into the nation, into his home, and into his heart.

This is but a faint adumbration of the One who was mightier than Boaz: Christ, our Redeemer. The title, Redeemer, is the highest given to Christ. It was first given to Him by Job, in

prophetic utterance: "For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth." -Job 19:25.

This glowing statement comes from possibly the oldest book of the Bible and expresses the heart cry of a man of ancient days. Isaiah, gazing into the dim distance of times far off, saw Christ bearing the high title of *Redeeme* ". . . and the Redeemer shall come to Zion."

*The Kinsman-Redeemer must be free himself.* The barefoot kinsman in the story of Ruth expressed his willingness to redeem. He acknowledged his kinship; but at this point, he failed. He could not redeem without incurring certain liabilities to his own property. There were certain encumbrances that might effect his inheritance. He might have suffered the same misfortune, or he might have feared that his present insolvency might some day result in his own hands being shackled by slavery.

This was not the case with Boaz. The story opens with the announcement of Boaz's prominence. He is called a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech. In an ancient translation, it reads: "A mighty man of law." This, too, is significant. Before the law, Boaz was mighty. He had met the demands of the law in his conduct and in his character. He was rich. He was mighty. He was completely free of any encumbrance of the past. There was no likelihood of any claim that might be brought against him or his property.

In every possible implication here suggested, Christ was free from the curse or slavery of sin. He knew no sin, neither was guile found in His mouth. He had a legal right through royal genealogy to the throne of King David. He never knew the stain of sin. The prince of this world came, but found nothing in Him. He kept the law in all of its points. He was made under the law; yet He was holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners. He was virgin-born, had no sinful nature. No claim He ever made was successfully refuted. He was the impeccable, unimpeachable, irreproachable Redeemer, and by this distinction, He could "give his life a ransom for many." He was able to "deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."

Jesus Christ presented all of the credentials of a Kinsman-Redeemer when He came to earth, and verified every claim before the blazing bar of God's divine holiness.

He was not like Moses; Moses was not a true type of Christ.

Moses was born a slave. God redeemed Israel out of Egypt; Moses was functioning in the capacity of a servant. Christ was a Son. Moses shows that God used a man; Christ reveals that God became a man. God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself.

*The Kinsman-Redeemer must have the price of redemption.* There is no mention of how much it cost him to redeem his kinsman's property; but however exorbitant the price might have been, Boaz was able and glad to pay it because of his love for Ruth.

The nature of sin and God's high estimate of life brought blood into prominence in the scheme of Redemption.

Its efficacy to redeem was underscored when the wholesale slaughter of the Passover lamb in Egypt stained every door post and lintel to save the first-born. Somehow, in the infinite councils God ordained that blood would be the legal tender that would ransom man from death.

"For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you upon the altar to make an atonement for your souls; for it is the blood that maketh an atonement for the sins." Twenty-one times, Scripture identified the blood of the Lord Jesus Christ as the legal tender of Redemption.

The blood of bulls and goats could not take away sin. The blood of man, tainted with the sin principle, could not atone. Silver and gold could not redeem. So God took upon Himself a human body. Thus, the blood that flowed in the veins of Jesus Christ was free from sin, yet it was the source of His earthly life. Christ shed His blood, the life of His earthly body for the payment in full of man's Redemption.

The value of currency is measured by what it can accomplish. In like manner, the purchasing power of the blood of Christ is what makes it precious.

Uncounted myriads of spiritual blessings are provided by the precious blood of Christ; neither of which can be measured in dollars and cents.

We know that our great Redeemer-Kinsman has paid the purchased possession. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord who breaks the power of cancelled sin." We have been made partakers of His holiness, and have received the earnest of our inheritance, and have been brought into His family, His house, and His heart.

This manifestation of His grace is just the beginning. We are

yet to come into the possession of our full inheritance, the purchased possession. "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you, who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation ready to be revealed in the last time." -I Peter 1:3-5.

In the final settlement of our lost inheritance, He will come forth and break the bands of the seven-sealed book, and present to the redeemed ones the title deed of their purchased possession.

*The final act of our Redeemer will be to avenge His bride* by the binding of Satan, the usurper, and casting him away into the bottomless pit.

From a stanza of Dean Alfred's grand old hymn:

*Ten thousand times ten thousand,  
In sparkling raiment bright  
The armies of the ransom'd saints  
Throng up the steps of light;  
'Tis finished, all is finished,  
Their fight with death and sin;  
Fling open wide the golden gates,  
And let the victors in.*