

REDEMPTION, PART 1

And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go and glean ears of corn in the field of him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go my daughter. And she went and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz who was of the kindred of Elimelech. (Ruth 2:1-3)

We should bear in mind that the resurrection of the dead is exclusively a New Covenant concept. Eternal life was a revelation that did not appear until the advent of Jesus Christ and the *New Covenant*. Until then the concept of survival and perpetuity of life was through children. That is why it was so very important that a man should have a fruitful child-bearing wife, and why Abraham was so distressed because of the barrenness of Sarah. It is also why a wife who was childless was in such reproach. If she was unable to produce an heir, she was a useless dead weight on her husband's hands. If her husband died with no children, it was the end of his existence. Not only was the absence of an heir, the end of a man's life: It was the end of his possession. His land would pass on to another family. God's law of Redemption anticipated, and preempted just such a scenario.

God's everlasting covenant made with Abraham in Genesis 13:14 and 17:8 included both a people and a possession. Measures had to be instituted that would preserve and perpetuate both. A man might have twelve sons, and equally divide his possessions among those twelve sons. Some of them would be less healthy or less diligent and less wise than others. Some would prosper and multiply. Others would fall upon hard times, become poor and lose their possession. Others would die, without leaving an heir. Revisiting the scene a few hundred years later, one might find some rich and enlarged. Others would have gone bankrupt, and yet others would have disappeared altogether. To prevent all of this, God established laws that would ensure both the everlasting continuity of both people and possession. These are recorded in Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and Leviticus 25:47-49.

In the typological significance of this historical record of the human lineage our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, two widows are now in focus: Naomi, the Jew who is in possession of God's promise, but is now too old to have another husband, and Ruth, the Moabite who is young enough to have a husband and produce an heir, but is also a widow. They are both hungry, and in desperate need of bread. They need natural bread to sustain their natural lives, but more important, they need the Bread of Heaven, that will ensure their everlasting survival. We shall see that the Lord faithfully and wonderfully supplies both at Bethlehem, the "*house of bread*" where Jesus was born!

Ruth, the Gentile, gets permission from Naomi, the Jew, to go into the field and seek bread. She knows she has no right or claim on such bread, and that if she is successful in her search, it will be by the grace of God. So, in reality this lost Gentile sinner is seeking grace! As we shall see, she shall find it, for "*he that seeketh, findeth*" (Matt. 7:8)! It just so happens that she lighted on a part of the field that belonged to the only man on earth who was qualified, had the power, the legal right and who would be willing to redeem her. Wonderful!!

Have you ever wondered over circumstances under which you were born and reared, the teachings and opportunities you were given, the fact that you came to be under the ministry and teaching of the Gospel of Jesus Christ when millions upon millions of people never have? God did not give His only begotten Son to die a horrible death at the hands of wicked men on the chance that some might believe upon Him and be saved. No man with a dozen or more sons would hazard one of them on such a possibility. Jesus Christ was born of a virgin, lived a perfectly obedient life to earn eternal glories, and then died as spotless sacrificial substitute for His elect people. If we have found forgiveness from sin, peace and joy in Christ, then He Whose eye is upon the sparrow will surely bring us in to perfect rest in Him

- C. M.
