

God Sends Hope: Boaz

A Possible Redeemer is Near in Bethlehem

Intro: Every good story has a hero. It's usually the one who enters in when the days look the bleakest and the nights loom the darkest. In chapter one we see the darkness, the gloom, the loss, the apparent hopelessness of Naomi and Ruth's loss. Having left her friends in Bethlehem Naomi left for Moab only to see her boys marry Moabite girls (which would cause trouble if they every went home), then her husband died, then her sons died and she tries to force her Moabite daughter-in-laws to depart from her. One stayed, but Naomi doesn't care right now. She doesn't care about life, she doesn't care about food, she doesn't care about anything in her despair. It is the darkest of darkness, the depth of despair, the loneliness of loss even when someone else is near. This is about as bad as it gets.

It is in the darkest of nights that light appears the brightest, and at the low point in this story the first rays of hope's dawn appear over the rugged mountains of Naomi's despair. It is here in the story that the narrator of the book of Ruth introduces us to Boaz, still, of course, unknown to Naomi and Ruth, but important enough to interject his very existence to us on this page. You see, in this one short verse interposed into the storyline there is a entire melody of hope heaped into the plot. Boaz is near.

Set in stark contrast to Naomi and Ruth's poverty, powerlessness, and alienation we see Boaz appear as wealthy, powerful, and near to redeem. Every problem facing these two waifs of widows is answered in Boaz. In the light of the incarnation of Jesus Christ we see that Boaz is a type of Christ. He is a picture, given in history by God, of what our Ultimate Redeemer would be. For, every problem that we have in this life (and the next) is answered in Jesus Christ. Every evil, every woe, every wound is atoned, comforted, and healed in Jesus. He is the true Hero rising from the dark night of our souls to redeem and restore, giving blessing upon blessing to those who fly to Him in faith.

Let us turn our attention now to the bitter heart of Naomi and introduction of the hero of Ruth's story.

1. A kinsman-friend (they alone were left in their family)
 - a. Proverbs 7:4, the only other time this word is used
 - i. poetic reflection of "sister"
 - ii. indicative of intimacy and nearness of relationship
 - b. through her husband (Elimelech)
 - i. He was a close friend of Elimelech's
 - ii. Most likely a cousin, but there is a sense of intimacy, rather than distance, indicated here
 - c. The narrator is giving us a knight in shining armor at the moment of greatest despondency
 - i. There is a crack appearing in the clouds of doom that is going to get wider and wider as the story unfolds
 - ii. Yet this one sentence opens up the story to great hope of a Redeemer for Naomi and Ruth
2. Man of Mighty Valor (they are weak in society and poor in provision)
 - a. typical title of a great warrior
 - i. Judges 11:1-5 – note that Jephthah was known as a great warrior-strategist
 - ii. 1 Kings 11:28
 - iii. 2 Kings 5:1
 - iv. 1 Chron 28:1 – David's "mighty men of valor"
 - v. 2 Chron 13:3
 - b. also great wealth
 - i. warriors supported own army at this time (no king, clan/tribal structure)
 - ii. 1 Sam 9:3 – Kish was a "man of mighty valor" who owned donkeys (indicative of wealth)

- iii. Here in Ruth we see that Boaz owned fields and had the resources to buy up Elimelech's land at a loss (of course, Ruth was quite a gain)
 - c. strong, successful
 - i. possibly fought against Moab (King Eglon)
 - ii. if my time estimate is correct, then Boaz may have been involved in the wars against Moab (Judges 3)
- 3. Clan of Elimelech (Full rights and salvation comes only from those within the clan)
 - a. clan members had specific duties to protect the poor and land
 - i. Lev 25 – obligation to buy the land for the sake of the poor, right of redemption
 - b. only clan members could own land within their given areas (Jos 13-17) that even other Israelites could not own
 - i. This indicates that Boaz most likely owned land in Bethlehem, nearby to Naomi and Ruth
 - ii. This gives us a glimpse that this impressive man may use his influence later on in the story
 - iii. Tension between Naomi/Ruth's peril and Boaz's greatness and strength
- 4. Boaz was his name (Strength meets their weakness as widows)
 - a. possible root 'in him is strength'
 - b. one of the pillars in Solomon's temple (Jachin and Boaz, cf. 1 Kg 7:21)
 - c. Boaz's father was Salmon who married Rahab, the Canaanite whore, and his grandfather was Nahshon, the chief of Judah's peoples and brother in law to Aaron (Num 2:3; 1 Chr 2:10; Ex 6:23)
 - i. Boaz came from a family of warrior-leaders, indicating that he, too, was a man of great strength and power

Jesus is Our Needed Redeemer Sent by God

- 1. Jesus is our Kinsman-friend
 - a. Jesus is the God-Man
 - i. Deity: (Col 2:8-9; Luke 24:52; John 1:1-18; 8:58; 10:30-31; 20:28; Phil 2:5-11; Rev 5:9-14)
 - ii. Humanity (Kinsman): John 1:14; Heb 2:16-18; 4:15; Col 2:9)
 - 1. Weakness: Luke 2:40
 - a. Tired – John 4:6
 - b. Thirsty – John 19:28
 - c. Hungry – Matt 4:1-2
 - 2. Grew in wisdom and stature
 - a. Luke 2:40
 - b. Luke 2:52
 - 3. Ordinary
 - a. Matt 13:53-58
 - b. Troubled – John 12:27
 - c. Amazed - Matt 8:10
 - b. The Only Mediator between God and Man
 - i. Heb 2:14-18 – It was through His death, as a man, that He saved us from death. He had to be made like His brothers to make an acceptable sacrifice for our sins.
 - ii. 1 Tim 2:5-6 – Jesus is the only mediator between God and man, because he is fully God and fully man

- iii. Heb 12:22-24 – as the mediator He has brought in a new covenant in His blood, whereby we are brought to the city of God
- 2. Jesus is our Mighty Man of Valor and Abundant Provision
 - a. Heirs with Inheritance:
 - i. 2 Cor 8:9 – though He was rich He became poor for your sake, so that you might become rich through His poverty
 - ii. Gal 3:26 – all are sons of God through faith in Him
 - iii. Eph 1:13-14 – the promised Holy Spirit seals us as heirs
 - b. Strength to obey:
 - i. 1 John 5:4-6 – through Christ we overcome the world, because Jesus is the Son of God
 - c. Strength to endure suffering:
 - i. Romans 8:33-39 – we overwhelmingly conquer suffering through Christ, for we cannot be separated from the love of God
 - d. Victory over death:
 - i. 1 Cor 15:51-57 – Victory over death through the death and resurrection power of Jesus!
- 3. Jesus is our Redeemer
 - a. He saves us from our sin
 - i. John 3:14-16 – He came to be lifted up to save the world from sin
 - ii. Titus 2:11-14 – Christ gave Himself up for us to *redeem us from all our iniquity* (which holds us captive) and to *purify for Himself a people zealous for good works*.
 - b. He redeems us from the curse of the Law
 - i. Galatians 4:4-5 – He redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having been born of a woman, sent by God as His Son, to give us the *adoption as sons*
 - c. He redeems our fallen world
 - i. Eph 1:9-12 – all things are summed up under Christ
 - ii. Rom 8:22-25 – the creation groans to be “born again”, even our bodies as we await the promised restoration and fullness of our redemption (the Spirit helps us wait!)
 - iii. 2 Pet 3:13 – we wait for new heavens and earth where righteousness dwells (cf. Rev 21:1)
- 4. Jesus is our Strength
 - a. 1 Peter 4:11 – all our ability to serve is by God’s strength so that Jesus would be glorified
 - b. 1 Peter 5:6-11 – God of all grace will strengthen us as we stand firm against the Enemy
 - c. Eph 1:18-21 – God’s power was shown immeasurably through Jesus Christ’s substitutionary death and resurrection, which gives us great hope
 - d. 1 Cor 1:18; 23-24 – Christ IS the power of God, His cross powerfully saves us!!
 - e. Rev 12:10 – the Accuser has been thrown down by Christ the King!!
 - f. Rom 1:16 – the gospel of Jesus is the power of salvation!!

Conclusion:

Here we have Naomi and Ruth: poor, powerless, and alienated. In stark contrast to their desperate condition and the blackness of chapter 1, Boaz appears as a shining hope on the horizon. This man is able to redeem them, for he is their kinsman. He is strong enough to redeem them for he is powerful and wealthy. The question in the story now is, is he willing to redeem them and save them from their destitution and hopelessness?

There is a greater redeemer from Bethlehem that followed after the impressive Boaz. In Jesus we have our Boaz who shines into the darkness of our sin and our condemnation. It is Jesus who left His place of honor in heaven, equal with the Father, to be born into the filth of a Bethlehem stable and spend His life redeeming ours. He is our kinsman, being born of a woman under the Law that He might redeem us from the Law’s curse due to our sin. He is strong

enough for He lived a perfectly submissive and obedient life to the Father and exchanged His perfect obedience for our heinous sins. In Him we have been given life because He took our death. We have been given an inheritance because He purchased our adoption from the wealth of His grace. In Him we have a table set for us in the wilderness where God dines with us, near us, among us. EVERY woe and distress that we bear in our lives is answered in Jesus Christ, for nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ Jesus, our Lord.

We don't know in the story, yet, what part Boaz will play, but we know what part Jesus has played in history in redeeming us. Whatever your struggle is today, whether it is against your own flesh, those desires that battle against you imploring you to trust something other than Christ to bring you joy; whether it is a struggle against poverty itself and the constant ache and anxiety of food on the table; whether it is the self-condemnation that the Enemy so proudly tries to crush you under with darts of self-pity and hopelessness; look to Jesus Christ today! He alone is capable and willing to redeem you. He is powerful and mighty to save you. He has proven His love for you in the very act of His incarnation and willing sacrifice in your place. Will He hold anything back from you that you really need? He is FOR YOU, O struggling saint. He will not fail. He is your Hero. Trust Him today and rest in His powerful redeeming arms, who has suffered and knows your suffering. The God-Man is near.