



CAPITOL COMMISSION

Under His Wings - Matthew 1:5

JANUARY 14, 2010

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This is the thirteenth in our series¹ of the “Scandalous Ancestry of Jesus Christ,” as recorded in Matthew chapter one.

In our last study of the 2009 session we discovered the determination and dedication of Ruth to her mother-in-law, Naomi.² Today I'd like to explore one of the most fascinating stories in the Bible. Ruth proposed to her prospective husband in a marvelous love story. You might view the book of Ruth as a “chick flick.” It is however, one of my favorite books in the Bible. I hope you enjoy it as much as I do.

One concept needed to understand this book is that of a kinsman redeemer. A kinsman redeemer was a person who could buy back a relatives property from the lien holder if they had fallen on hard times. He would redeem the property and the people who had been mortgaged. The Hebrew word is גֹּאֵל gaw-al' and means “to be the next of kin (and as such to buy back a relative’s property, marry his widow, etc.)”³

Matthew 1:5 “And Salmon begat Booz [Boaz] of Rachab; and Booz [Boaz] begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;”

Ruth 4:4 [Boaz said] “And I thought to advertise thee [nearer relative], saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he [the nearer relative] said, I will redeem it.”

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 “If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child... her husband’s brother shall... take her to him to wife... And if the man like not to take his brother’s wife... Then shall his brother’s wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother’s house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.”

REFUGE

UNDER HIS WINGS I AM SAFELY ABIDING;
THOUGH THE NIGHT DEEPENS AND TEMPESTS ARE WILD,
STILL I CAN TRUST HIM, I KNOW HE WILL KEEP ME;
HE HAS REDEEMED ME, AND I AM HIS CHILD.
UNDER HIS WINGS, UNDER HIS WINGS,
WHO FROM HIS LOVE CAN SEVER?
UNDER HIS WINGS MY SOUL SHALL ABIDE,
SAFELY ABIDE FOREVER.⁴

In our previous glimpse into the life of Ruth, we saw her tenacious determination to serve Naomi and Naomi’s God. “Your God will be my God, where you die I will die and nothing but death will part us.”⁵ In the second chapter of Ruth we find that Ruth was rewarded for her dedication by Boaz, a wealthy landowner and relative of Naomi who was genuinely concerned about her welfare. Boaz even had his employees drop grain on purpose and allowed her to gather grain right out of the heaps of grain! In Boaz’s conversation with Ruth, he conveyed that he was well aware of her story and how she had cared for her mother-in-law. He even noticed and commented that in her difficult time she had come under the wings of God.

Ruth 2:12 “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” [Boaz]

What a place to be - in the shelter of the Most High God! This becomes a recurring theme for Ruth’s great grandson David in multiple passages⁶ in the Psalms, including Psalm 57:1 “Be merciful unto me, O God, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in thee: yea, in the shadow of thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be [past].”

But what does it mean to be “under the wings” of the Almighty God? This can be explained in a tradition in ancient Israel that has continued to this day among the Jews.

“The prayer shawl was a significant part of the wardrobe of Jewish men during biblical times. It also had several names as well, namely: "talith", "talis" or "talit." The word, "talith" is actually a combination of two separate Hebrew terms. "Tal" means tent in the English language while "Ith" stands for little. Combining these words together, you will form "Little Tent." Since every man during the biblical times owned a little tent, there were a good number of men that pursued a livelihood of being a tentmaker. One prominent figure would be the apostle, Paul, who made tents for a living. Historians have hypothesized that he may have been more of prayer shawl maker than actually a tentmaker. Prayer shawls were not only sacred for the Jews, but they also served as a metaphorical place of refuge for those who wanted to praise God. It was meant to wrap an individual in an intimate relationship with God through immense prayer.”⁷

“EVEN TO THE PRESENT DAY, WHEN A JEW MARRIES A
WOMAN, HE THROWS THE SKIRT OR END OF HIS TALITH
OVER HER, TO SIGNIFY THAT HE HAS TAKEN HER UNDER
HIS PROTECTION.”⁸

BIBLE STUDIES

LEGISLATORS: THURSDAY @ 7:30AM, GOVERNOR’S OFFICE
STAFF AND LOBBYISTS: FRIDAY @ 12:00PM, CHAPEL ROOM 432
EVERYONE WELCOME TO ATTEND CHAPEL SERVICES: THURSDAYS @ 12:10PM

Indiana

Under His Wings



At this time the groom will also cover his bride with his Talith or prayer shawl.

REDEMPTION

After Ruth shared her productive harvest with her mother-in-law, Naomi devised a plan to see her faithful daughter-in-law remarried. Naomi directed Ruth to clean up, put on some perfume, and go to Boaz's workplace to propose a potential marriage with him! Ruth did exactly as Naomi instructed.

What right did Ruth as a stranger and Gentile have to approach the wealthy and influential Boaz and ask him to marry her? There was a law in the country of Israel that an indebted family could request a near relative to redeem the property from the mortgage holder if he chose to do so. This person was known as the kinsman redeemer. In the case of Boaz the condition was that he would have to marry the widow of the deceased debtor.

A KINSMAN REDEEMER HAD TO BE RELATED, HAVE A MEANS TO PAY THE DEBT, AND BE WILLING TO PAY.

Ruth recognized she had nothing to offer this powerful man, yet she honored her mother-in-law by following her instructions in asking Boaz to marry her. Ruth approached Boaz late at night, lay at his feet by the heap of grain, and waited for him to wake up. He awoke with a start and demanded who was in the barn. She responded that it was Ruth and based on the fact that he was her near kinsman she requested him to marry her. Boaz was related to Naomi. He had the means as a wealthy prince, and he was willing. Therefore, he met the criteria of a kinsman redeemer and had apparently thought about this scenario already as his response was

that there was a relative nearer than he. Boaz told Ruth to go home and wait until he resolved the matter. If the near relative chose to redeem her, Naomi, and the property, then so be it. Boaz obtained a flat refusal from the other man and happily married Ruth.

CONCLUSION

Through this picturesque story we see that Ruth had found refuge in the shadow of God's wings. Even in extreme circumstances when all seems lost – Ruth was a widow, in a foreign country with a bitter mother-in-law – we can find refuge in an all-powerful God.

Do you know the peace that comes from being in the shelter of the Almighty? Have you ever asked him to redeem you from your debt of sin?⁹ Jesus Christ became flesh to identify with us,¹⁰ lived a sinless life to pay our debt of sin,¹¹ and has declared His willingness to pay.¹² He meets all of the requirements of a Kinsman Redeemer, and can shelter us under His wings in the midst of the storm!

¹ For the previous study in this series please visit www.publicservantsprayer.org and click on the Bible Studies page.

² "Never, Never, Never Give In" April 23, 2009

³ Strong's Hebrew and Greek Concordance H1350 גָּאָל, *gaw-al'* A primitive root, to *redeem* (according to the Oriental law of kinship), that is, to be the next of kin (and as such to *buy back* a relative's property, *marry* his widow, etc) avenger, deliver, (do, perform the part of near, next) kinsfolk, purchase, ransom, redeem (-er), revenger.

⁴ Page 378 in the Statehouse chapel hymnal: *Bible Truth Hymns* - Lyrics: William Cushing (1823-1902) Music: Ira Sankey (1840-1908)

⁵ Ruth 1:16-17 "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: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."

⁶ Psalm 17:8 "Keep me as the apple of the eye, hide me under the shadow of thy wings,"; Psalm 36:7 "How excellent is thy lovingkindness, O God! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of thy wings,"; Psalm 61:4 "I will abide in thy tabernacle for ever: I will trust in the covert of thy wings. Selah,"; Psalm 63:7 "Because thou hast been my help, therefore in the shadow of thy wings will I rejoice."

⁷ Meryl Rougeaux posted in *News and Society*

⁸ *Adam Clarke's Commentary on the Whole Bible* Ruth 3:9

⁹ Matt 6:12 "And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors,"; Romans 3:23 "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;"

¹⁰ John 1:14 "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us"

¹¹ Hebrews 4:15-16 "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

¹² Romans 10:13 "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved." Galatians 3:13 "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law." Titus 2:13,14 "Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ; Who gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works."