

“Jesus Christ our Redeemer and The Law of Kinship”

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Long ago in the old world a man who killed another accidentally, with no malice or forethought, was hunted down and killed by the slain person’s family. There was no trial. There were no clues to uncover and prove one’s innocence. There was only the blood of the slain man upon the hands of the slayer. Whether it be an accident or not, the blood had to be avenged. In Gen. 9:4-6 we see that this was a decree from God to Noah and it has become embedded in many different cultures to this day via blood feuds, one of theirs for one of ours. When God made His covenant with Abraham things began to change. God revealed a new and better way of life to His chosen people. We call it the Law of Moses. The Law of Kinship is just one small part of the Law of Moses that pertains to this shedding of innocent blood.

The Hebrew word for kinsman can be separated into three categories of thought:

1. One too closely related for marriage.
2. A neighbor or acquaintance. (The people of Israel were given lands of inheritance based on their tribe)
3. One who has the right to redeem.

The word “redeem” in Hebrew can be further divided into two meanings.

Padah: (6299) ransom, sever, release, preserve, deliver, or rescue.

Gaal: (1350) to be the next of kin, avenger, deliverer, purchase, ransom, redeem(er), revenger.

We learn from the scriptures that this word *gaal* is a direct reference to the law of kinship.

In Ruth 4:4 we see an example of both forms of the word redeem.

“...If thou wilt redeem it, (gaal: as if to say perform your rights as kinsman -djm) redeem it: (padah: meaning quit loafing around and fork over the money then-djm) but if thou wilt not redeem it, (gaal) then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it (gaal) beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said I will redeem it (gaal).”

This scripture shows a difference between the two usages as well as some of the rules or formalities regarding the law of kinship if we read vs. 1-8. To redeem something in the *padah* sense is more of a payment or ransom, to release or sever from debt or bondage. To redeem something in the *gaal* sense is to perform the right of the law of kinship. In the example of Ruth, Boaz challenged the nearest kinsman for his right to marry a widow and buy land. For more uses of the *gaal* form of the word redeemer see Lev. 25:25-49 and ch.27 Here we find examples of buying back a relatives property or delivering them from servitude. It is interesting to note that in 27:27 we have another example of *padah* and *gaal* in the same verse. It is clear that according to the Law of Moses there is a distinct and precise usage of the word *gaal* instead of *padah* when referring to the law of kinship.

We also learn here that, the land of inheritance that is sold, and the Israelite who becomes an indentured servant are both released from their debt and returned to their original owners or released from the burden of servitude at the celebration of/during the year of Jubilee. Jubilee takes place every seventh set of seven years or fiftieth year. This celebration of Jubilee is a study in itself. What I take from these scriptures is the symbolism of the land of your inheritance being restored to you and the importance God places on repentance and forgiveness.

In Jeremiah 32:7-8 we see another example of the right of redemption belonging to the closest relative when Jeremiah’s uncle needs to sell his land. It is also interesting to see the process was similar to that of Boaz and that it required witnesses and was written in a book and sealed. I especially like vs. 13-15 where God says,

“Take these evidences, this evidence of the purchase, both which is sealed, and this evidence which is open; and put them in an earthen vessel, that they may continue many days. For thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel; Houses and fields and vineyards shall be possessed again in this land.”

While this prophecy has been fulfilled, I see it also as an evidence of the law of kinship and its promises being eternal and unchanging when God refers to himself as our redeemer in the *gaal* sense of the word.

The following references show that the law of kinship has three purposes and has specific rules governing each one.

1. It provides a new husband for a widow to carry on the name of the deceased patriarch. The kinsman (or closest relative) is responsible for the family and will marry the widow. (Deut. 25:5-10, Ruth 4:1-8)

2. 2. The kinsman is also responsible for any debts the family has accrued and is obligated to buy back or redeem the land of inheritance for the family should it be lost or sold. (Lev. 25:25-49, Jer. 32:7-15)
3. 3. Only the kinsman (or Blood Avenger) can pursue a slayer, however he has to follow the rules set out by the “cities of refuge” scripture references. This section can best be rehearsed by reading all three scripture references and then going over the points of interest.
(Ex.21: 12-15, Num. 35:9-34, Deut. 19:1-13)

Points of Interest regarding the Blood Avenger and the cities of refuge:

1. 1. God provided a place of refuge made accessible for all of Israel, ‘strangers and sojourners alike’.
2. 2. The congregation shall deliver the slayer out of the hands of the blood avenger and he shall dwell therein until the death of the high priest.
3. 3. If the slayer leaves his place of refuge and ventures outside the walls of the city before the year of jubilee, the blood avenger can kill him.
4. 4. Two witnesses are required to condemn a murderer at a trial or hearing conducted by the elders of his original town or city. Those found guilty of premeditated murder are released into the hands of the kinsman/blood avenger.
5. 5. Blood defileth a land. The land cannot be cleansed but by the blood of him that shed it.
6. 6. God commanded that the land on the west of the Jordan River be divided, that each area will have a city of refuge nearby. God provided for three more cities to be set aside if it became necessary, so that refuge will always be close by.

In Deut 4:41-43 Moses had already set aside three cities on the east of the Jordan River. In Joshua ch.20 the lord gave a commandment to Joshua to appoint cities of refuge just like he said to Moses. Another interesting fact is that these cities were all under the care and possession of the Levites who were the priesthood of the House of Israel. (Also related to the idea of cities of refuge are the examples of the Altar of God as an accepted place to flee in 1 Kings 1:50-53, 2:28-34.)

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In Exodus 6:6-7 we see an example of God using *gaal* when speaking to Israel,

“I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will rid you out of their bondage, and I will redeem you with a stretched out arm, and with great judgments: 7. And I will take you to me for a people, and I will be to you a God:”

This scripture claims ownership and inclusion into a covenant with God. Another scripture in Numbers 5:8 claims the rights of kinship for God.

“But if the man have no kinsman to recompense the trespass unto, let the trespass be recompensed unto the lord, even to the priest; beside the ram for atonement, whereby an atonement shall be made for him.”

The earliest usage of the term *gaal* is in Gen. 48:16.

“The Angel which redeemed me from all evil, bless the lads;”

The word Angel is capitalized. Through cross-referencing the scriptures we can go back to the dream of Jacob’s ladder (28:10-15) where this same Angel is the Lord pronouncing his covenant to Jacob: *“the land whereon thou liest, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed;”* and to *“keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land;”* So we see that in the beginning it was God that instituted a covenant of redeeming to the land of inheritance and redeeming from the world wherever we are.

There are no definitions of redeemer in the New Testament that reflect this deeper meaning of *gaal*. You have to look at the Old Testament Hebrew words to find this deeper understanding of our “Redeemer”. Among the verses that use the *gaal* form of the word redeemer instead of the *padah* form are:

Hosea 13:14, “*I will ransom thee from the power of the grave; I will redeem thee from death:*”
Job 19:25 “*For I know that my redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at that latter day upon the earth:*”

Proverbs 23:10-11, “*Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless: For their redeemer is mighty; he shall plead their cause with thee.*”

Micah 4:10 “*...for now shalt thou go forth out of the city, and thou shalt dwell in the field, and thou shalt go even to Babylon: there shalt thou be delivered; there the lord shall redeem thee from thine enemies*”

Jeremiah 50:33-34, “*Thus saith the Lord of hosts; The children of Israel and the children of Judah were oppressed together: and all that took the captives held them fast; they refused to let them go. Their Redeemer is strong; the Lord of hosts is his name: he shall throughly plead their cause, that he may give rest to the land, and quiet the inhabitants of Babylon.*”

These examples show that the “redeeming” will take place at Christ’s second coming. Take a close look at the idea of the field being the safe place to be even though Babylon is everywhere around them. ‘The field of the fatherless’ is the land of our inheritance and the sight of our redemption where we await the return of Christ. “Remove not the old landmark; and enter not into the fields of the fatherless” is a warning to all who fight against the Church of Christ and try to purchase or take away their inheritance. It’s as if to say entering the field and considering the purchase of it and removing the old landmarks is a poor investment. For when the year of jubilee comes and Christ the redeemer returns, the field will be returned to those of the rightful inheritance.

While these scriptures show the aspects of the law of kinship that refer to our debts that He has paid for the land of inheritance, and the responsibility of the kinsman to the family of the widow; further study will also show an aspect of the inheritance which I believe to be heaven, or more correctly, return to the presence of God like in the days of Adam, and a separation from the world as we know it, i.e. Babylon.

Isaiah 63:15-16, “*Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory: where is thy zeal and thy strength, the sounding of thy bowels and of thy mercies toward me? Are they restrained? Doubtless thou art our father, though Abraham be ignorant of us, and Israel acknowledge us not: thou O Lord, art our father, our redeemer; thy name is everlasting.*”

The New Song of Moses is referred to in Revelations 15:3. “*for he will avenge the blood of his servants,*” I refer now to a verse from the song of joy. Deut. 32:43 In the first song of Moses, or the “old” one, the children of Israel sang a song of gratitude unto the Lord after successfully crossing the Red Sea. These are not coincidences. The fact that Revelations puts the time frame of the new song of Moses at final judgment lends credibility to the Law of Kinship as a type. Both of these songs of Moses have references to the blood avenger or gaal.

Ex. 15:13 “*Thou in thy mercy hast led forth the people which thou hast redeemed: (gael) thou hast guided them in thy strength unto thy holy habitation.*” (See Is. 60:16 & Rev. 20)

The following verses show the characteristics of the blood avenger.

Ps. 69:18, “*Draw nigh unto my soul and redeem it: deliver me because of mine enemies.*” take note of vs. 24 “*Pour out thine indignation upon them, and let thy wrathful anger take hold of them.*”

Ps. 72:14, “*He shall redeem their soul from deceit and violence: and precious shall their blood be in his sight.*”

Rev 19:2 “*For true and righteous are his judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.*” 6:10, 18:20 and Deut. 32:43.

Virtually every reference in the book of Isaiah for redeemer is the gaal form. Many of these scriptures refer to modern day times and events. Consider this one:

Isaiah 52, Book of Mormon pg. 661 vs.74-79, 106 “*76...Ye have sold yourselves for naught; and ye shall be redeemed without money... 79. touch not that which is unclean...”106. “For it shall come to pass, saith the Father, that at that day, whosoever will not repent and come unto my beloved Son, them will I cut off from among my people, O house of Israel, and I will execute vengeance and fury upon them, even as upon the heathen, such as they have not heard.”* Also read Is. 63:1-10, Rev. 14:18-20, 19:11-21

Recap:

Written in the Law of Moses are many types and foreshadowing of Christ. (2 Ne 8:7-9 pg. 116, 2 Ne 11:45-54 pg. 143) With this in mind we can draw some conclusions based on the law of kinship that point to the return of Christ. These conclusions provide a deeper understanding and an added witness to the authenticity and divine nature of the scriptures.

1. 1. There is a place of refuge prepared and will be preached to all the world for the people of Israel, for the Gentiles and for the world and every creature, it is the New Testament of Christ. (Luke 16:15-16)
2. 2. Christ is still our high priest. We have to be baptized and stay in our place of refuge until He comes again. (Hebrews 4:14)
3. 3. If we fall away from the path and leave our place of refuge or become part of the world we will die. (1st John 2:15-17)
4. 4. Contained in the Bible and Book of Mormon are the two witnesses that can condemn us. (1 Nephi 3:193-196, 3 Nephi 13:3, Rev. 20:12)
5. 5. The shedding of the blood of the saints and the martyrs of Jesus (Rev. 17:6) has defiled this world. This world cannot be cleansed 'but by the blood of him that shed it'. Babylon the Great must fall. It has been this way since God spoke to Noah (Genesis 9:4-6) and since Cain slew Abel. *"And he said, What hast thou done? The voice of thy brother's blood crieth unto me from the ground."* Genesis 4:10 Remember when the blood avenger returns we will all be judged according to our works not just whether or not we are guilty of murder, but whether we allowed Christ to die for us; and for our sins, in vain.
6. 6. Israel is not guilty of murder but of manslaughter and therefore has a place of refuge in the gospel and Church of Christ. The idea of God delivering someone into your hands to be killed also absolves someone of guilt. (Luke 23:34, Ex. 21:13)
7. 7. Of the Holy Trinity Christ is most related to us and is our kinsman and shall 'thoroughly plead our cause'.
8. 8. Through His death our debt of the fall of Adam is paid and we are redeemed. Because He is our high priest we are free to choose to leave our 'cities of refuge' or choose to follow His commandments.
9. 9. At the second coming of Christ He will be our blood avenger and only after justice has claimed all that belong to her will we be returned to the presence of God.

The Law of Kinship is one aspect of the Law of Moses, which typifies Christ. Many of the uses of the word for redeemer pertain to the law of kinship and through understanding this law we can gain a deeper understanding of these scriptures. As a foreshadowing of things to come it reflects our refuge in the Gospel and love of Christ and points forward to His second coming as a blood avenger. All too often the religions of this day show Christ's return as a peaceful occasion in which all who are or have been "saved" need not fear. The truth is that all who find refuge in the Church of Christ and endure to the end, without straying from the 'city of refuge' need not fear. Anyone found to be in or part of this world when He returns will have a swift and terrible judgment pronounced upon them by Christ, the Redeemer and blood avenger.

Luke 12:1-5. These are the words of Christ. I will quote vs. 5 and encourage you to read 6-7.

"But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him, which after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, fear him."