



Volume 8 Issue 4

West Suffolk Epistle West Suffolk Baptist Church



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Thoughtfully Reformed - Redemptively Relevant

Christ Our Kinsman-Redeemer

Jesus encourages us to look for Him in the Old Testament (Luke 24:25–27) and those Scriptures speak of Him primarily in two ways—in prophecy and in type. While prophecies are verbal predictions of Christ, types are anticipations of Him in person, event, and institution. Romans 5:14 teaches that Adam was a type of Christ. The exodus from Egyptian bondage is a type of redemption from sin. The institutions of prophet, priest, and king all prefigured the One who unites these three offices in Himself (Hebrews 1).

In the book of Ruth, Boaz, in his role as kinsman-redeemer, is a type of Christ. In the Old Testament, kinsman-redeemers were relatives who protected needy members of their extended families. They could redeem a relative sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47–49), or preserve the family line of a deceased male relative by marrying his widow and providing an heir (Deuteronomy 25:5–6). They could also redeem land that a poor relative had sold outside the family (Leviticus 25:25), or even avenge the blood of a murdered relative (Numbers 35:19–21).

Three kinsman-redeemers appear in Ruth. There is an unnamed kinsman-redeemer who is willing to redeem the land of Naomi's husband Elimelech, but is unwilling to marry Ruth and perpetuate Elimelech's seed (Ruth 4:1–8). Careful readers will notice that the baby Obed is the kinsman-redeemer who appears at the climax of the story. Indeed, at Obed's birth the women sing of Naomi: *"Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! And may he be to you a restorer of life ..."* (Ruth 4:14–15).

But the chief kinsman-redeemer figure is certainly Boaz, a well-to-do relative of Naomi's on Elimelech's side (Ruth 2:1). He is a godly man who has a good relationship with his workers (Ruth 2:4), who cares for Ruth (Ruth 2:8–9, 14–16), and for Naomi (Ruth 2:11–12, 19–20). He is a responsible man whose willingness to fulfill the role of kinsman-redeemer contrasts with the unwillingness of his fellow family member (Ruth 3:10–13; 4:9–10). He redeems the land that belonged to Elimelech by purchasing it from Naomi. In addition, he preserves Elimelech's line by marrying Ruth, who subsequently gave birth to a son.

Neither the Old Testament nor the New explicitly labels Boaz a type of the Christ who was to come. Nevertheless, the book of Ruth hints at such a connection. As we already have seen, Obed is the final kinsman-redeemer mentioned in the book. Ruth concludes with a summary of King David's genealogy. The last four names intrigue us: "Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David" (Ruth 4:21–22). Ruth's son by Boaz was the grandfather of David, the great king of Israel and ancestor of the Messiah.

From the New Testament we know that the genealogy in Ruth is incomplete. Matthew 1:1 brings it to its ultimate goal, *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham."* Matthew, in fact, lists twenty-eight generations from David to Christ. So, the kinsman-redeemer Boaz was father of the kinsman-redeemer Obed, who is grandfather of King David, who is ancestor of the Lord Jesus Christ! Praise be to God for His gracious ways with human beings! He engrafts a Moabitess into His covenant people Israel, and from her union with the kinsman-redeemer Boaz ultimately brings forth **THE REDEEMER** of sinners, Jesus Christ.



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We should not expect Boaz and Jesus to match up at every point. Boaz, to cite one example, was a sinner who needed a Savior, but Jesus was that Savior. Still, Boaz does foreshadow Jesus in at least three ways. **First**, Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, is a wealthy landowner in Bethlehem, the city of Jesus' birth.

Second, Boaz was a *kinsman*-redeemer. Ruth 2:1 begins the story of how the bitter Naomi became happy again (see Ruth 1:20–21). *“There was a relative of Naomi’s husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.”* Later, when Ruth returns from her productive day of gleaning in Boaz’s fields, Naomi exclaims, *“Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!”* And Naomi said to her, *‘This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives’* (Ruth 2:20). We see, then, that Boaz’s pedigree qualifies him to perform the role of kinsman-redeemer to Ruth and Naomi.

The words of Hebrews 2:14–15 readily come to mind: *“Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage.”* The Son of God became a flesh and blood human being so that as the God-Man he could defeat our great enemy and liberate us from the terrors of hell.

The writer to the Hebrews continues, *“For indeed He does not give aid to angels, but He does give aid to the seed of Abraham. Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people”* (Hebrews 2:16–17). God the Son did not become an angel, but a human being. He wanted to be like His brothers and sisters *“in all things.”*

Third, Boaz was a type of Christ as a *kinsman-redeemer*. He preserved Elimelech’s land and family line. In this capacity he foreshadowed the great Redeemer of sinners, the Lord Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul unites the elements of kinsman and Redeemer in Galatians 4:4–5: *“But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons.”* Because the Son of God partook of genuine humanity and thereby became our kinsman, He is qualified to deliver us. He became one with us so that we children of Satan (See 1 John 3:10) might become the sons and daughters of the living God! ~ **Dr. Robert A. Peterson - Professor of Systematic Theology at Covenant Theological Seminary**

The Longsuffering God **II Peter 3:8-9**

Some have a willful forgetting, but to the saints Peter says, *“But do not overlook this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.”* (vv. 8–9). The fact that all these things have not yet come to pass is not because God is slack. It is not because His word has become of no effect. It is not because He is a God of false promises. Rather, God is longsuffering toward us. The kingdom had not been fully realized when these words were written because God is unwilling that any should perish.



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The Longsuffering God II Peter 3:8-9 Continued from Page 2

When Peter says that God is not willing that any should perish, there are **two** ambiguities to consider. *First* is with respect to the meaning of the term “willing.” In the New Testament there are *two* distinct Greek words that can be translated by the English word willing. It would be helpful to be able to discern the meaning simply by looking at the Greek and seeing which word is used, but it is not that easy, because each of the words has several nuances. The Bible uses the term *will* with respect to God in several ways. Of the **three** most frequent ways, the *first* is what we call His “sovereign will” or “decretive will”; that is, whatever God wills must necessarily come to pass. When God willed the universe into creation, He did not wish it; He sovereignly decreed it, and it had to come into being.

The *second* way in which the Bible speaks of the will of God is in a perceptive sense, that is, in what God commands His followers to do. It is God’s will that you have no other gods before Him. That is His perceptive will, His law. It is not a sovereign will that must necessarily come to pass, because every human being by nature breaks that will. We can violate the perceptive word of God, and we do violate it every time we sin.

The *third* use of the term will in the New Testament has to do with the basic disposition of God toward fallen humanity. We can call that the “*will of disposition.*” The Bible tells us, for example, that God does not delight in the death of the wicked or in the punishment of evildoers. He still decrees their punishment, but His doing so is almost like a just judge sentencing his son to prison. He would not do so with glee or delight.

Of these **three** major usages of the term will, we have to ask which one is in view in Peter’s text. I think at face value the text is teaching something about God’s sovereign, efficacious, decretive will. We have to read this to mean that God sovereignly, efficaciously is not willing that any should perish but that all should come to repentance. The critics of election say that we cannot hold that God sovereignly wills to save some and not others since the text says that He sovereignly wills to save everybody. This does pose some ambiguity as to what the term “*willing*” refers to here.

The real question concerns the word “*any*”—“*God is not willing that any should perish.*” The assumption that people read into the text is that “*any*” refers to everyone or any person. If that is the case, then Peter would be saying that God sovereignly is not willing that anyone should perish. Sometimes when an objection is raised to a position, the argument brought forth proves more than the objectors want it to prove. The Arminian objection to the Reformed view of this text is that if God is not willing that anyone should perish, then it proves universalism. It would prove that everyone is saved and that no one perishes, but how can that be squared with everything else the Bible teaches to the contrary?

If we are going to understand this text in its context, we have to consider the antecedent of the word “*any.*” There is no mystery to that; it is abundantly clear in the text itself. God is “*longsuffering toward us, not willing that any should perish*”—the antecedent of “*any*” is “*us.*” The only question left to answer is the identity of the “*us.*” That, again, is not difficult. Peter is clearly distinguishing the believer from the unbeliever, the scoffer, and the false prophet. In order to correctly grasp the context of “*us*” in 1 and 2 Peter, we need only look to whom these epistles are addressed—Peter is writing to the **elect**. Therefore, the “*any*” and the “*us*” are the elect. No passage in all Scripture more strongly defends unconditional election than this one.



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The Longsuffering God *II Peter 3:8-9* *Continued from Page 3*

God sovereignly decrees that none of His elect will perish and that all whom He has chosen will come to Him. They will repent. They will come in faith to Him, because election is not in the abstract. Election is unto faith, repentance, and salvation.

If the kingdom had been finished a hundred years ago, none of us would have made it in. God is not going to consummate that kingdom unless or until every last one of His elect is brought into it. There is no problem here concerning God's sovereignty, but there is a testimony to the grace and mercy of it. ~ **Commentary on II Peter - Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.**

Steadfast in the Truth

During the middle ages, Roman emperors would call for meetings called "diets" whenever the need arose for representatives of imperial estates to deliberate on political, societal, and ecclesiastical matters pertinent to the Roman Empire. The Diet of Worms was held in the town of Worms (pronounced "worms"), Germany, from January 28 to May 25, 1521. Worms is located in southwestern Germany on the Rhine River. At the time of the diet, Worms had a population of about seven thousand, and the imperial diet brought to town an estimated ten thousand visitors, including the most powerful and prominent men of the empire, along with their entourages. At stake was the unquestioned, authoritative control of the Roman emperor, Charles V, and the peace and unity of his empire. Johann Eck, representing the emperor, deemed one man in particular a threat to that peace and unity—a thirty-seven-year-old Augustinian professor from Wittenberg named Martin Luther.

When Luther appeared at the Diet of Worms on April 15–18, the assembly had already been meeting for nearly three months. At first, Luther was not scheduled to appear. He was summoned after he publicly burned the papal bull *Exsurge Domine* on December 10, 1520. The bull, drafted largely by Eck and issued by Pope Leo X in June, listed forty-one charges against Luther and threatened his excommunication if he did not recant his teachings against some of the actions and teachings of the church, particularly as they pertained to the sale of indulgences to fund the construction of St. Peter's Basilica in Rome. Luther burned the papal bull in response to Eck's burning of Luther's books throughout Germany. Luther's refusal to repent prompted Leo to excommunicate Luther in another papal bull titled *Decret Romanum Pontificem* on January 3, 1521. However, Luther remained under the protection of the elector of Saxony, Frederick III, which gave him freedom to preach and teach throughout the Saxon region. Luther's audacious actions fueled the growth of his teachings' popularity, leading many churches throughout the region to support and follow him.

When Luther appeared before the diet, he remained steadfast in his insistence that the Word of God is the ultimate and only infallible authority for all of faith and life, for he knew that although he was standing before the most powerful men in Europe—men who could take his life—he also stood before God, who alone has the power to give life through the gospel of Jesus Christ, which is the power of God to salvation to everyone who believes. ~ **Dr. Burk Parsons**



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Christ's Sympathy for His People

Jesus knows, understands, and sympathizes with our human weaknesses. Just as every human priest who preceded Him “can deal gently with the ignorant and misguided, since he himself also is beset with weakness” (Hebrews 5:2), the Lord is also able to identify with us as His frail people.

As a child, Christ learned and grew like anyone (Luke 2:52). It is clear that He voluntarily veiled His omniscient knowledge from His human consciousness (Matthew 24:36). His sympathy toward us flows out of His experience—as a man—of all our non-sinful weaknesses. A true high priest had to be sympathetic with those to whom he ministered. A true high priest would be completely involved in the human situation, immersed in the realities of life. That's why Jesus needed to live among men as a man, to feel with them in their highs and in their lows and deal gently with them.

Metriopatheō, besides meaning “to deal gently,” also means to treat with mildness or moderation. In the context of Hebrews 5:2, it can carry the idea of being in the middle of things—in two ways. *First* is the meaning of being in the midst of something and fully involved. The *other* is that of taking a middle ground—of knowing and understanding, but of avoiding extremes. A person with this characteristic would, for example, show a certain balance between irritation and apathy in the face of wrongdoing. He would be patient with the wrongdoer but not condone the wrong—understanding but not indulgent.

A better example would be in relation to grief or danger. A person who is either too sympathetic or too apathetic cannot help someone in trouble. The one who is too sympathetic will himself be engulfed by the problem, becoming too grief stricken or too scared to be of help. On the other hand, the one who is apathetic possibly will not even recognize a problem someone else is having and, in any case, will not be concerned about helping. In the middle is the person *metriopatheō* describes. He can fully identify with the person having a problem without losing his perspective and judgment. A true high priest needed this characteristic. He had to experience the extremes of human emotions and temptations while being stronger than them. Thereby he would be able to deal gently with those to whom he ministered, without falling victim to their misery.

The ones with whom the priest is to “*deal gently*” are those who are “*ignorant and misguided*,” that is, those who sin through ignorance. The Old Covenant provision was: “*The priest shall make atonement before the Lord for the person who goes astray when he sins unintentionally, making atonement for him that he may be forgiven*” (Numbers 15:28). The priest ministered only in behalf of those who sinned in ignorance and thus went astray. In all of the Old Testament economy, there is absolutely no provision made for the unrepentant, deliberate, and defiant lawbreaker. There is none. “*But the person who does anything defiantly, whether he is native or an alien, that one is blaspheming the Lord; and that person shall be cut off from among his people*” (Numbers 15:30).

So the emphasis here is on sympathy. The high priest was meant to have sympathy toward those who ignorantly went astray. Since the Jewish priest himself was a sinner, he had the natural capacity, and he ought to have had the sensitivity, to feel a little bit of what others were feeling. Jesus Christ was sympathetic with men—He was identified with them, understood them, and felt with them. Yet He did all this without ever sinning.

The Lord was Himself a man, just as surely as any high priest that served in the Tabernacle or Temple before Him. “*The days of His flesh*” (Hebrews 5:7) were an interlude in the life of Jesus Christ, who existed before and after His earthly life. But they were an extremely important and necessary interlude. Among other things, “*He offered up both prayers and supplications*” because of the anguish He faced in becoming the sin-bearing substitute for those who believe in Him.



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Christ's Sympathy for His People

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In the Garden of Gethsemane on the night before He went to the cross, Jesus prayed and agonized so intensely that He sweat great drops of blood. His heart was broken at the prospect of bearing sin. He endured God's wrath against His people. He felt temptation. He shed tears. He hurt. He grieved. What He had always known in His omniscience, He tangibly felt as a man. He is a fully sympathetic high priest because He experienced what we experience and felt what we feel.

Often the best, and sometimes the only, way to learn sympathy is by suffering ourselves what another is suffering. Suffering is a very skilled teacher. We can read about and hear about the pain of being burned. We can even see people being burned. But until we have been burned ourselves, we cannot completely sympathize with a burn victim. I had read about, and even seen, many automobile accidents; but only after I was involved in one that almost took my life did I realize how horrible they can be.

Jesus had to learn certain things by suffering (Hebrews 5:8). He was given no exemption from hardship and pain. Even though He was God's Son, God in human flesh, He was called to suffer. And He was obedient in His suffering all the way to death—and God therefore affirmed Him as a perfect High Priest.

That is the kind of high priest we need—one who knows and understands what we are going through. When we go to the Lord in prayer and fall on our knees before Him saying, "*God, this problem, this loss, this pain is breaking my heart,*" how wonderful it is to be comforted by our sympathetic Savior, who intimately understands and cares about our pain—our sympathetic High Priest "*who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin*" (Hebrews 4:15). ~ **Dr. John MacArthur**

Resurrection and Justification

How is the resurrection of Christ linked to the idea of justification in the New Testament? To answer this question, we must first explore the use and meaning of the term justification in the New Testament. Confusion about this has provoked some of the fiercest controversies in the history of the church. The Protestant Reformation itself was fought over the issue of justification. In all its complications, the unreconciled and unreconcilable difference in the debate came down to the question of whether our justification before God is grounded in the infusion of Christ's righteousness into us, by which we become inherently righteous, or in the imputation, or reckoning, of Christ's righteousness to us while we are still sinners. The difference between these views makes all the difference in our understanding of the Gospel and of how we are saved.

One of the problems that led to confusion was the meaning of the word justification. Our English word justification is derived from the Latin *justificare*. The literal meaning of the Latin is "*to make righteous.*" The Latin fathers of church history worked with the Latin text instead of the Greek text and were clearly influenced by it. By contrast, the Greek word for justification, *dikaiosisune*, carries the meaning of "*to count, reckon, or declare righteous.*"

But this variance between the Latin and the Greek is not enough to explain the debates over justification. Within the Greek text itself, there seem to be some problems. For example, Paul declares in Romans 3:28, "*Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith apart from the deeds of the law.*" Then James, in his epistle, writes, "*Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar*" (2:21) and "*You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only*" (2:24).



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Resurrection and Justification

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On the surface, it appears that we have a clear contradiction between Paul and James. The problem is exacerbated when we realize that both use the same Greek word for justification and both use Abraham to prove their arguments.

This problem can be resolved when we see that the verb *“to justify”* and its noun form, *“justification,”* have shades of meaning in Greek. One of the meanings of the verb is *“to vindicate”* or *“to demonstrate.”*

Jesus once said, *“Wisdom is justified by all her children”* (Luke 7:35). He did not mean that wisdom has its sins remitted or is counted righteous by God by having children, but that a wise decision may be vindicated by its consequences.

James and Paul were addressing different questions. James was answering the question: *“What does it profit, my brethren, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can faith save him?”* (2:14). He understood that anyone can profess to have faith, but true faith is demonstrated as authentic by its consequent works. The claim of faith is vindicated (justified) by works. Paul has Abraham justified in the theological sense in Genesis 15 before he does any works. James points to the vindication or demonstration of Abraham’s faith in obedience in Genesis 22.

The Resurrection involves justification in both senses of the Greek term. *First*, the Resurrection justifies Christ Himself. Of course, He is not justified in the sense of having His sins remitted, because He had no sins, or in the sense of being declared righteous while still a sinner, or in the Latin sense of being *“made righteous.”* Rather, the Resurrection serves as the vindication or demonstration of the truth of His claims about Himself.

In his encounter with the philosophers at Athens, Paul declared: *“Truly, these times of ignorance God overlooked, but now commands all men everywhere to repent, because He has appointed a day on which He will judge the world in righteousness by the Man whom He has ordained. He has given assurance of this to all by raising Him from the dead”* (Acts 17:30-31).

Here Paul points to the Resurrection as an act by which the Father universally vindicates the authenticity of His Son. In this sense, Christ is justified before the whole world by His resurrection.

However, the New Testament also links Christ’s resurrection to our justification. Paul writes, *“It shall be imputed to us who believe in Him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead, who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification”* (Romans 4:24-25).

It is clear that in His atoning death Christ suffered on our behalf, or for us. Likewise, His resurrection is seen not only as a vindication of or surety of Himself, but as a surety of our justification. Here justification does not refer to our vindication, but to the evidence that the atonement He made was accepted by the Father. By vindicating Christ in His resurrection, the Father declared His acceptance of Jesus’ work on our behalf. Our justification in this theological sense rests on the imputed righteousness of Christ, so the reality of that transaction is linked to Christ’s resurrection. Had Christ not been raised, we would have a mediator whose redeeming work in our behalf was not acceptable to God.

However, Christ is risen indeed! ~ ***Dr. R.C. Sproul, Sr.***



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If you have a April birthday or anniversary that is not posted here or is listed in error, please e-mail Walt at (gwlcfl0415@gmail.com).

Birthdays and Anniversaries Corner April 2021

Birthdays

*Nehemiah W. (1)
Amber H. (4)
Carol L. (7)*

*David A. (8)
Jeremy W. (26)*

Anniversaries

*Walt and Carol L. (15)
Jack and Rita B. (16)*

When we live a life focused on temporary pleasures, we can only expect temporary happiness. In contrast, by living for that which is eternal, we find purpose and joy in our daily life. We have a home that is waiting and an inheritance coming. It's imperishable, unfading, and undefiled. It's safe. Therefore, Peter tells us, "Set your hope fully on the grace that will be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 1:13). We can put all our eggs in this basket, with no fear. Christ's resurrection secures our future. If we are in Him, then one day we shall "bear the image of the man of heaven" (1 Corinthians 15:49).

Knowing that we have an eternity before us changes everything about how we live today. We seek to glorify God in all that we do. We seize the day to share with others the grace that is to come. We live life to the full, abounding in the work of the Lord because we know it isn't in vain. We make the most of every moment as we actively store up treasures in heaven, where moth and rust cannot destroy. As living sacrifices, we experience the truth of Jesus' words, "For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will save it" (Mark 8:35).



West Suffolk Baptist Church Leadership

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