

# *Significance of the Levirate Marriage in Ruth*

**MEANING:** A "levirate marriage" was the marriage of a brother-in-law to his widowed sister-in-law, living at the father's house (i.e., the younger brother not having yet married).

**PURPOSE:** To preserve the name and family line of the deceased brother and to make provision for his widow.

**PASSAGES:** Gen. 38:8 —The original principle stated and illustrated.  
Deut. 25:5-6 —The Mosaic principle as divinely sanctioned.  
Lev. 25:25-28 —The kinsman-redeemer relationship stated.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES OF KINSMAN-REDEEMER BRIDEGROOM:**

- 1) To be qualified as a kinsman—a legitimate, close kinsman.
- 2) To be qualified as a redeemer—capable to redeem from the debts and poverty of the indebted deceased.
- 3) To be a willing defender, protector, and go-between.
- 4) To be a willing bridegroom and provider for those he redeems.

## **THE APPLICATIONS IN THE BOOK OF RUTH:**

- 1) Naomi and Ruth were widows needing redemption and protection to preserve the line of Elimelech and Mahlon.
- 2) Boaz alone qualified as kinsman-redeemer by virtue of his kinsman relationship and his ability to adequately redeem.
- 3) The marriage of Boaz to Ruth preserved the line of Elimelech, but also produced the royal line of kingship in Israel.
- 4) The tracing of the genealogy back to Perez also emphasizes the levirate relationship in Ruth. It was just prior to the birth of Perez (who was born of incest) that the levirate responsibility was first pronounced to Onan at the death of Er (Gen. 38:8).

## **THE TYPICAL APPLICATION TO CHRIST AND THE CHURCH:**

- 1) Christ became one of the race as a qualified Kinsman.
- 2) Christ provided full redemption by his payment of man's debt and His provision for man's happiness. (All that man lost in Adam's death, Christ more than supplied.)
- 3) Christ became man's able Defender and Go-between.
- 4) Christ fulfills this type as the heavenly Bridegroom taking a Gentile bride whom He warmly welcomes and richly endows.