

Never Forgotten: A Widow's Redemption

Today's world population is over 7 billion¹. Have you ever wondered if you would be forgotten in the shuffle? Forgotten not just by your neighbor, but even by your Creator? When God looks at the vast world might you be overlooked, especially when so many others have done much more with their life? Have you ever felt lost and alone – hopeless? Welcome to Naomi's story – the woman many would have thought forgettable. Darker still, she believed God's hand was against her (1:13, 20-21). However, God can never forget His people. Not because they have something to offer, but because of who He is. He always has His eye on them, including the destitute, childless widow, living in enemy territory, who believed God cursed her. She had a surprise coming: redemption! Although the book is entitled Ruth, the central focus is on God redeeming the lost widow. He will take her from being empty and bitter, to being full and joy-filled. His chasing grace will be funneled through the costly actions of a worthy Moabite widow (3:11) and a worthy Israelite land owner (2:1; 4:11), and the son they shall bear. Incredibly, the boy will be *Naomi's* son (4:17), through whom she will find life-restoring redemption (4:14-15), and through whom the nation's redemption would arrive. Indeed, it was through his lineage that mankind can find ultimate, eternal redemption (4:18-22). Are you one who will never be forgotten?

QUICK REASONS TO PLACE THE EMPHASIS ON GOD'S REDEMPTION OF NAOMI:

- Repetition of "redemption" (or redeem, redeemer) = 19x's in the ESV²
- Naomi is the focus of the opening and closing (1:1-5; 4:13-22) = the story begins with Naomi lost and bereft of husband and sons, and ends with her being restored and redeemed. The women even proclaim that Obed is her son.
- Naomi is the only character who changes throughout the story.

¹ Trying to envision this? Consider: the average adult has 100,000 strands of hair on their head. If you filled a stadium with 70,000 people (think professional baseball or football stadium), that would total 7 billion hair follicles present. You are represented by one piece of hair among every other strand!

² Hebrew term occurs 22x's. It is translated differently in a few occurrences (i.e. "do it", 3:13)

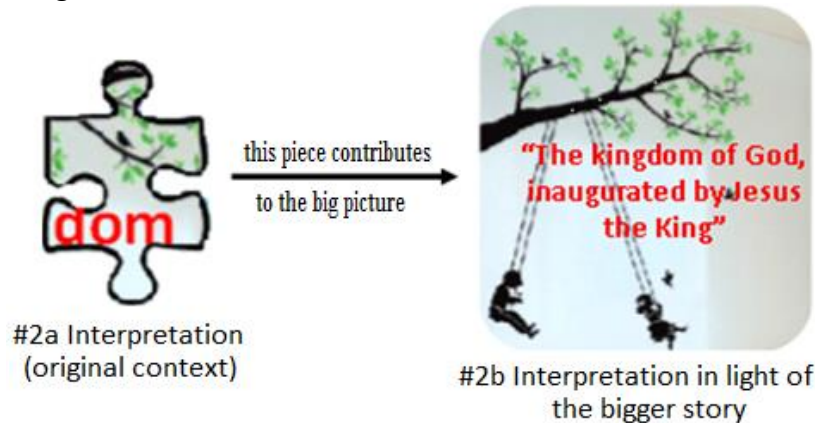
#2b: interpretation – in light of the bigger story (description)

The meaning of a passage in its original context is not the end of the story. This is because no passage of the Bible is an island unto itself, but is part of the progressive story of Scripture, which climaxes and centers on the Christ event (the life, death, resurrection, present reign and return of Jesus). The story begins in a garden and ends in a garden (and a city), and is jam-packed with tragedy and grace-filled triumph in between. From beginning to end, the Bible is:

The story of God building His kingdom through the redeeming work of Christ, and what life as His people under His rule ought to be like



This overarching story necessarily impacts the meaning of each passage. Consider an individual puzzle piece. It is not left sitting all alone, because it only reaches its full meaning when placed in the big picture. In the same way, every passage should be read as a piece contributing to the bigger picture of Scripture, where it reaches its ultimate meaning.



Therefore, we need to ask every passage: **how does the main idea direct us to the Christ and/or His work in redemption?** In order to answer this, the first step is to describe the *main point of the passage in its original context* (this is the answer given to the question in #2a Interpretation (original context)). Be sure to *stay with the meaning of the passage in its original setting* to avoid focusing on minor textual details and making illegitimate connections to Jesus. We're not looking for a "new" or "hidden" meaning.

Next, describe how that *main point* directs us to the Christ by determining the appropriate category from the C-H-R-I-S-T acronym, which suggests six ways a passage might be directing us to the Christ event.

Ask: Is the truth of this passage...



Turn over

A Command/Biblical ethic only Christ can fulfill and empower

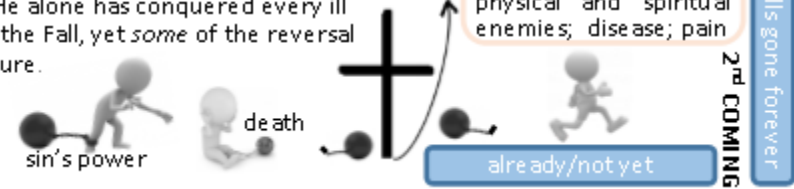
God's commands are for our good and are to be kept perfectly. However, we fail to keep them, and therefore deserve His judgment. Simply trying harder won't solve the problem, because the heart must be fixed and God's justice must be served. Enter Jesus: who kept the law perfectly for His people, bore the full penalty for their law-breaking, gave them new hearts, and sent the Holy Spirit to empower them in holiness (see Ezek. 36:26-27; 1 Pet. 4:11).



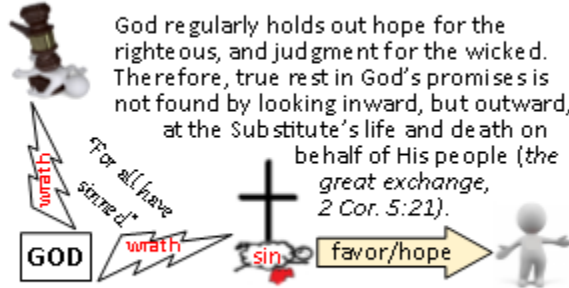
An Ill that can only be righted or resolved in Christ

Many passages leave us in angst because of man's condition. It is only through Jesus' work that we can view these problems with hope rather than defeat. He alone has conquered every ill effect of the Fall, yet some of the reversal is still future.

Example Ills
natural disaster; death; power and curse of sin; physical and spiritual enemies; disease; pain



A Hope in which only Christ can give real reason to trust and rest

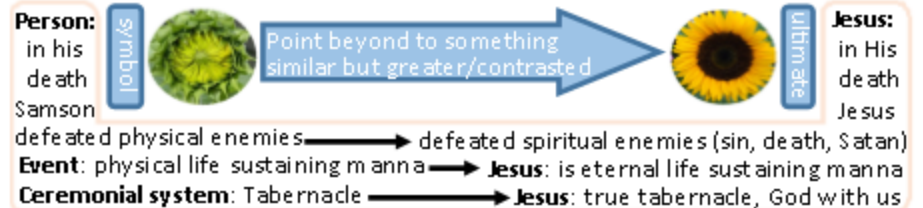


Various ways of fulfillment

- direct (Mic. 5:2; Mt. 2:5-6)
- different in literal terms (Is. 40:3-5; Lk. 3:1-6)
- increasing depth (Gn. 12:1; Heb. 11:10; Rev. 21:1-2)
- re-occurring (Ps. 69:33)
- installments (Is. 61:1-2; Lk 4:18-19)

A Symbol illustrating an aspect of the Christ event

Symbols are real people, events, and aspects of the ceremonial system, that God ordained to foretell the Christ event. These symbols point beyond themselves to Someone who would function similarly, but even greater or in stark contrast.



A Reoccurring theme that eventually climaxes in Christ

Various themes and patterns run through Scripture, and when traced out are seen in new light and ultimately demonstrated in Christ.

Example themes: God's grace for sinners; God's rest; God turns evil for His glory and the good of his people; salvation through substitution; Promise Land; God's wrath toward sinners.



A Timeline update of the redemption to be accomplished in Christ

