

What is a Kinsman-Redeemer?

A kinsman-redeemer (translated from the Hebrew word *go'el*) is a close male relative who holds the legal duty and privilege to rescue, protect, or buy back a family member who has fallen into desperate trouble, poverty, or slavery.

Biblical and Cultural Role

In ancient Hebrew law (found in books like Leviticus and Deuteronomy), the *go'el* had specific responsibilities to safeguard the extended family:

- **Buying back property:** Reclaiming family land that was sold off due to extreme debt or poverty.
- **Freeing slaves:** Purchasing the freedom of a relative forced into servitude.
- **Marrying a widow:** Providing an heir and security for a childless widow to keep the family line and property intact.
- **Acting as an avenger:** Pursuing justice if a family member was unlawfully killed.

The classic illustration of this role appears in the [Book of Ruth](#), where a wealthy relative named Boaz steps forward to redeem both Naomi's lost property and marry Ruth.

Theological Significance

In Christian theology, the concept points directly to Jesus Christ. Jesus is viewed as the ultimate "Kinsman-Redeemer" because He took on human flesh (becoming a close brother/relative to humanity) to pay the ultimate price—His own life—to rescue people from the debt of sin and restore their relationship with God.