Exodus

Birth and Adoption of Moses

2 Now a man of the house of Levi married a Levite woman,* and the woman conceived and bore a son. Seeing what a fine child he was, she hid him for three months. 3But when she could no longer hide him, she took a papyrus basket,* daubed it with bitumen and pitch, and putting the child in it, placed it among the reeds on the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she sent her attendants to bathe at the Nile, while her attendants walked along the bank of the Nile. Noticing the basket among the reeds, she, her sister, and mother were moved with pity for him and said, “It is one of the Hebrews’ children.” Then his sister asked Pharaoh’s daughter, “Shall I go and summon a Hebrew woman to nurse the child for you?” 5Pharaoh’s daughter answered her, “Go.” So the young woman went and called the child’s own mother. Pharaoh’s daughter said to her, “Take this child and nurse him for me, and I will pay your wages.” So the woman took the child and nursed him. 6When the child grew, she brought him to Pharaoh’s daughter, and he became her son. 7She named him Moses; for she said, “I drew him out of the water.”

2:8 And I will pay your wages: the idea that the child’s mother will be paid for nursing her child—and by Pharaoh’s own daughter—heightens the narrative’s irony.

Who Are These People?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hebrews</th>
<th>Jews</th>
<th>Israelis</th>
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On the surface of things, Boaz appears on the scene as a just and fair landowner. He upholds the gleaning laws, making sure that there is plenty left in the fields for those who have nothing, and he goes the extra step to assure that Ruth the foreigner has access to water throughout the day and access to his own meal. He even blesses her and asks the Lord to reward her for her fidelity and care of Naomi.

Beneath the surface, Boaz is much more. He is clearly painted as one like God—filled with compassion for the poor, even acting as a redeemer (go’el). Technically, one who is next of kin (2:20) can redeem or recover what belonged to a deceased male relative.

More symbolically, Boaz enters the picture in much the same way as God entered the scene in Egypt on behalf of the slaves. Just as God witnessed their afflication, heard their cry, and came down to rescue Israel (Ex 3:7-8), Boaz witnesses, hears, and rescues Ruth (and Naomi).

The Meeting

1 Naomihad a powerful relative named Boaz, through the clan of her husband Elimelech. 2 Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “I would like to go and glean grain in the field of anyone who will allow me.” Naomi said to her, “Go ahead, my daughter.” 3 So she went. The field she entered to glean after the harvesters happened to be the section belonging to Boaz, of the clan of Elimelech. 4 Soon, along came Boaz from Bethlehem and said to the harvesters, “The Lord be with you,” and they replied, “The Lord bless you.” 5 Boaz asked the young man overseeing his harvesters, “Whose young woman is this?” 6 The young man overseeing the harvesters answered, “She is the young Moabite who came back with Naomi from the plateau of Moab.” 7 She said, “I would like to gather the gleanings into sheaves after the harvesters.” Ever since she came this morning she has remained here until now, with scarcely a moment’s rest.”

Boaz, Compassionate Redeemer

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2:1Kinship ties and responsibilities now become very important. Boaz is introduced as one of a group surrounding Naomi through her husband’s kin who are expected to extend care. The particular term used here (modi’a, ‘relative’) is picked up in Ruth 2:3; otherwise, most of the terminology about this responsibility to care will use the vocabulary of redeeming (go’el, ‘redeemer’).

2:2Israelite custom made provision for the poor, the widow, the orphan and the stranger to gather what was left behind by the harvesters, and instructed farmers not to cut to the edges of their fields, for the sake of those marginalized; Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19-22.

2:4The story brings Boaz upon the scene quickly, but he moves among his workers with the grace of a man of prominence, greeting them and being received with courtesy. The Hebrew blessing formulae used are close to Isaiah 41:10.

2:7The verse is somewhat garbled, but the points are clear that Ruth has been appropriately deferential in seeking permission to glean, and has worked steadily since arriving. Or perhaps she has waited patiently until Boaz arrives to gain permission.

Boaz then spoke to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Do not go to glean in anyone else’s field; you are not to leave here. Stay here with my young women. Watch to see which field is to be harvested, and follow them. Have I not commanded the young men to do you no harm? When you are thirsty, go and drink from the vessels the young people have filled.” 10Casting herself prostrate upon the ground, she said to him, “Why should I, a foreigner, be favored with your attention?” 11 Boaz answered her: “I have had a complete account of what you have done for your mother-in-law after your husband’s death; you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom previously you did not know. 12May the Lord reward what you have done! May you receive a full reward from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” 13 She said, “May I prove worthy of your favor, my lord. You have comforted me. You have spoken to the heart of your servant—and I am not even one of your servants!” 14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and have something to eat; dip your bread in the sauce.” Then as she sat near the harvesters, he handed her some roasted grain and she ate her fill and had some left over. 15 As she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young people: “Let her glean among the sheaves yourselves without scolding her, and even drop some handfuls and leave them for her to glean; do not rebuke her.

16She gleaned in the field until evening, and when she beat out what she had gleaned it came to about an ephah 1/3 of barley, 1/2 which she took into the town and showed to her mother-in-law. Next she brought out what she had left over from the meal and gave it to her. 17 So her mother-in-law said to her, “Where did you glean today? Where did you go to work? May the one who took notice of you be blessed!” Then she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked. “The man at whose place I worked today is named Boaz,” she said. 18 “May he be blessed by the Lord, who never fails to show kindness to the living and to the dead,” Naomi exclaimed to her daughter-in-law. She continued, “This man is a near relative of ours, one of our redeemers.” 19 He even told me,” added Ruth the Moabite, “Stay with my young people until they complete my entire harvest.” 20 “You would do well, my daughter,” Naomi rejoined, “to work with his young women; in someone else’s field you might be insulted.” 21 So she stayed gleaning with Boaz’s young women until the end of the barley and wheat harvests.

Ruth Again Presents Herself

3 When Ruth was back with her mother-in-law, 3 Naomi said to her, “My daughter, should I not be seeking a pleasing home for you?” 4 Now! Is not Boaz, whose young women you were working with, a relative of ours? This very night he will be

2:13 Servant: only here is the language of servanthood used. Ruth has spoken with very deferential words to Boaz, but then seems to think that she has assumed too much.

2:17 Ephah: one mina (as elsewhere) is 72 liters or 174 gallons.

2:20 For the first time, the story uses the Hebrew word go’el, ‘redeemer,’ for the responsibilities of the kinship circle surrounding Naomi and Ruth and their deceased relatives. Involved are the recovery or retention of family land (Lev 25:25; 27:9-33; Jer 32:6-25), release of a relative from voluntary servitude to pay debts (Lev 25:47-55), and ‘redeeming blood’ or vengeance, attested in passages which regulate such vengeance. No explicit connection is made elsewhere in the Bible between marriage responsibilities and redeeming.

3:2 Ruth’s determined action to bring relief to Naomi and her own circumstances now impels Naomi to move, using means available in Israelite custom which no one in the story has up to this point brought into play.
In Galatians 4–5 Paul contrasts the notions of slavery and freedom as a natural consequence of the salvific actions of Jesus Christ. Paradoxically, those who voluntarily make themselves “slaves” of Christ experience the greatest freedom of all (1 Cor 7:22). Observe the contrast outlined below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Slavery</th>
<th>Freedom</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To the Law (Torah)</td>
<td>To live for Jesus Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To circumcision, the mark of identity</td>
<td>To live the law of a new, new identity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbolized by Hagar, the slave woman and Isha, her offspring, a “child of the flesh”</td>
<td>Symbolized by Sarah, the free woman, and Issac, her offspring, a “child of the spirit”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Natural “hei”</td>
<td>Adopted “heirs”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tied to the earthly Jerusalem</td>
<td>Tied to the Jerusalem “above”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sealed in the covenant on Sinai</td>
<td>Sealed in the “new covenant” in Christ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads to sin</td>
<td>Leads to all the effects of salvation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leads to death</td>
<td>Leads to eternal life</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

that he is bound to observe the entire law. “You are separated from Christ, you who are trying to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace. 4For through the Spirit, by faith, we await the hope of righteousness. “For in Christ Jesus, neither circumcision nor uncircumcision counts for anything, but only faith working through love.”

**Be Not Minded**

1You were running well, who hindered you from following [the] truth? 2That enunciation does not come from the one who called you. 3A little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough. 4I am confident of you in the Lord that you will not take a different view, and that the one who is troubling you will bear the condemnation, whoever he may be. 5As for me, brothers, if I am still preaching circumcision, why am I still being persecuted? In that case, the stumbling block of the cross has been abolished. 6Would that those who are upssetting you might also castigate themselves!

**Freedom for Service**

7For you were called for freedom, brothers. But do not use this freedom as an opportunity for the flesh; rather, serve one another through love. 8For the whole law is fulfilled in a single statement, namely, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.”

5:6 Cf. Romans 2:25-26; 1 Corinthians 7:19; Galatians 6:15. The Greek for faith working through love or faith expressing itself through love can also be rendered as faith energized by (God’s) love.

5:7-12 Paul addresses the Galatians directly: with questions (5:7, 11), a proverb (5:9), a statement (5:8), and biting sarcasm (5:15), seeking to persuade the Galatians to break with those trying to add law and circumcision to Christ as a basis for salvation.


5:8 The one who called you: see note on Galatians 1:16.

5:11 Preaching circumcision: this could refer to Paul’s pre-Christian period (possibly as a missionary for Judaism); more probably it arose as a charge from opponents, based perhaps on the story in Acts 16:1-3 that Paul had circumcised Timothy “on account of the Jews.” Unlike the Gentle Titus in Galatians 2:3 Timothy was the son of a Jewish mother. The stumbling block of the cross: cf. 1 Corinthians 1:23.

5:12 A sarcastic half-wish that their knife would go beyond mere circumcision; cf. Philippians 3:2 and the note there.

5:15-26 In light of another reminder of the freedom of the gospel (5:13; cf. 5:1), Paul elaborates on what believers are called to do and be: they fulfill the law by love of neighbor (5:14-15), walking in the Spirit (5:16-26), as is illustrated by concrete fruit of the Spirit in their lives.


5:14 Leviticus 19:18, emphasized by Jesus (Mt 22:39; Lk 10:27); cf. Romans 13:8-10.


5:19-23 Such lists of virtues and vices (cf. Rom 1:29-31; 1 Cor 6:9-10) were common in the ancient world. Paul contrasts works of the flesh (5:19) with fruit (not ”works”) of the Spirit (5:22). Not law, but the Spirit, leads to such traits.

5:21 Occasions of envy: after the Greek word phthonioi, “enrages,” some manuscripts add a similar sounding one, phonioi, “murders.”

6:1-10 The ethical exhortations begin at Galatians 5:1 continue with a variety of admonitions to the community (brothers: see the note on 1:2). Nearly every sentence contains a separate item of practical advice; the faith and freedom of the gospel underlie each maxim. Tensions and temptation within communal life have previously been addressed in Galatians 5:15, 26 and Galatians 6:1 continues with a case in which a person is caught in some transgression such as those in Galatians 5:19-21; cf. Galatians 2:17.

6:2 The law of Christ: cf. Romans 8:2; 1 Corinthians 9:21; Galatians 5:14. The principle of love for others is meant. To bear another’s burdens is to “serve another through love” (5:13; 6:2).

6:4-5 Self-examination is the cure for self-deception. Compare what you are with what you were before, and give the glory to God; cf. Romans 6:19-22. Load: used elsewhere of a soldier’s pack. Correcting one’s own conduct avoids burdening others with their burden of sins.
The Agony in the Garden

32 Then they came to a place named Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here while I pray.” 33 He took with him Peter, James, and John, and began to be troubled and distressed. 34 Then he said to them, “My soul is sorrowful even to death. Remain here and keep watch.” 35 He advanced a little and fell to the ground and prayed that if it were possible the hour might pass by him; “he said, “Abba, Father,” all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me, but not what I will but what you will.”

When he returned he found them asleep. He said to Peter, “Simon, are you asleep? Could you not keep watch for one hour? 38 Watch and pray that you may not undergo the test. The spirit is willing but the flesh is weak.” 39 Withdrawing again, he prayed, saying the same thing. 40 Then he returned once more and found them asleep, for they could not keep their eyes open and did not know what to answer him. 41 He returned a third time and said to them, “Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? It is enough. The hour has come. Behold, the Son of Man is to be handed over to sinners. 42 Get up, let us go. See, my betrayer is at hand.”

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

43 Then, while he was still speaking, Judas, one of the Twelve, arrived, accompanied by a crowd with swords and clubs who had come from the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders. 44 His betrayer had arranged a signal with them, saying, “The man I shall kiss is the one; arrest him and lead him away securely.” 45 He came and immediately went over to him and said, “Rabbi.” And he kissed him. 46 At this they laid hands on him and arrested him. 47 One of the bystanders drew his sword, struck the high priest’s servant, and cut off his ear. 48 Jesus said to them in reply, “Have you come out as against me with swords and clubs, to seize me? 49 Day after day I was with you teaching and serving, and you did not arrest me; but that the scriptures may be fulfilled.”

50 And they all left him and fled. 51 Now a young man followed him wearing nothing but a linen cloth about his body. They seized him, 52 but he left the cloth behind and ran of faked.

Jesus before the Sanhedrin

53 They led Jesus away to the high priest, and all the chief priests and the elders and the scribes came together. 54 Peter followed him at a distance into the high priest’s courtyard and was seated with the guards, warming himself at the fire. 55 The chief priests and the entire Sanhedrin kept trying to obtain testimony against Jesus in order to put him to death, but they found none. 56 Many gave false witness against him, but their testimony did not agree. 57 Some took the stand and testified falsely against him, alleging, 58 “We heard him say, ‘I will destroy this temple made with hands and within three days I will build another not made with hands.’” 59 Even so their testimony did not agree. 60 The high priest rose before the assembly and questioned Jesus, saying, “Have you no answer? What are these men testifying against you?” 61 But he was silent and answered nothing. Again the high priest asked him and said to him, “Are you the Messiah, the son of the Blessed One?” 62 Then Jesus answered, “I am; and you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of the Power and coming with the clouds of heaven.”

An Unnamed Follower

The unnamed young follower of Jesus who appears in this climactic scene is not an accidental figure. In such a compact gospel as that of Mark, there is little room for incidentals. But what does he bring to the story? What does he represent to the reader?

Those present at the arrest of Jesus included not only those followers we have come to know by name but also some whose identities are never known. Jesus touched many who apparently followed him without fanfare. It happened then and it happens now.

What are we to make of the simple linen cloth worn by this man? Is this a literary technique included only to give drama to the story, or is it intended to prefigure the linen cloth that will wrap Jesus in death? Does he leave it behind in personal terror or does he leave it behind in anticipation of Jesus’ eventual need for it?

And what are we to make of the young man running off? The scene is somewhat reminiscent of the rich man who went away sad when told that to inherit eternal life he is to sell all his possessions (Mk 10:17-22). Is this young follower who literally left everything behind as he departed an intentional “counter-reminder” of that rich man whose fate we never know? Is the young man at least to be seen as a reminder for staying on the scene longer than the named disciples of Jesus who fled immediately?

Discipleship requires everything of us: following without recognition or fanfare, being present with Jesus and his followers even in the dark hours, simplicity of life, and the willingness to stay the course rather than flee the unexpected.