

Reading Plan

July

Covenant

Week Eleven

Monthly Description

YHWH desires all of humanity to be reconciled into relationship with him. This relationship between God and his human family is called *covenant*. God's covenant with us secures our position within in his family. As part of his covenant relationship with us, God promises to care for and bless his people. In return we, as his people, promise loyalty to him.

Redemption

Note: Daily descriptions in **bold**.

Weekly Description:

Throughout this week we will read about the role of redemption within the cultures of the Old Testament. While we may think of redemption as entirely a spiritual concept, for the ancient Hebrews and their surrounding cultures, redemption was a social construct deeply woven into the fabric of their families and their lives. In the ancient Near East (and in many parts of the world today), what constituted a family often included many relatives living in close physical and relational proximity to one another, all under the watchful care of the oldest living male in that family. This family unit was called the *bêt 'āb*, and the oldest living male was the patriarch of that family. The patriarch's function in society was to assume responsibility for each and every member of his extended family and the family's resources. A patriarch also had a responsibility to rescue or ransom a member of his kin if they found themselves in a devastating life circumstances. The patriarch of each *bêt 'āb* was the safety net or "strong tower" in which their family could find security and refuge (cf. Prov. 18:10).

This week's daily readings examine examples of redemption from the Old Testament. And we will see how these examples of redemption ultimately lead us to understand the role of YHWH as the patriarch over his human family. As estranged members of his household, we were bound under the crippling bondage of sin. Not only did YHWH set out to redeem us back from that bondage, but he sent the most honorable member of his *bêt 'āb* to do the redemption: his son Jesus. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, humanity's redemption was won and by him we have been restored to the Father's house. As the final reading of the week shows us, Christ's work to redeem humankind redeems us to wholeness, both spirit and body, to dwell with him in new creation.

Weekly Video:

To understand more about concept of redemption, listen to Pastor Kerri Weems' message here: <https://www.kerriweems.com/2018/06/19/ot/>

Day One: Abram Redeems Lot

After an enormous battle involving two opposing alliances of kings, Abram's nephew, Lot, was captured. Upon hearing of his capture, Abram set out to rescue ("redeem") Lot from bondage and bring him back from captivity to dwell among his family. The story of Lot's redemption looks ahead to our own redemption. This expression of redemption portrays how a patriarch was expected to rescue a relative bound by crippling life circumstances and bring them back into the safety of the patriarch's family.

Genesis 14:1-24 (ESV)

In the days of Amraphel king of Shinar, Arioch king of Ellasar, Chedorlaomer king of Elam, and Tidal king of Goiim, ² these kings made war with Bera king of Sodom, Birsha king of Gomorrah, Shinab king of Admah, Shemeber king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar). ³ And all these joined forces in the Valley of Siddim (that is, the Salt Sea).

⁴ Twelve years they had served Chedorlaomer, but in the thirteenth year they rebelled. ⁵ In the fourteenth year Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him came and defeated the Rephaim in Ashteroth-karnaim, the Zuzim in Ham, the Emim in Shaveh-kiriathaim, ⁶ and the Horites in their hill country of Seir as far as El-paran on the border of the wilderness. ⁷ Then they turned back and came to En-mishpat (that is, Kadesh) and defeated all the country of the Amalekites, and also the Amorites who were dwelling in Hazazon-tamar.

⁸ Then the king of Sodom, the king of Gomorrah, the king of Admah, the king of Zeboiim, and the king of Bela (that is, Zoar) went out, and they joined battle in the Valley of Siddim ⁹ with Chedorlaomer king of Elam, Tidal king of Goiim, Amraphel king of Shinar, and Arioch king of Ellasar, four kings against five.

¹⁰ Now the Valley of Siddim was full of bitumen pits, and as the kings of Sodom and Gomorrah fled, some fell into them, and the rest fled to the hill country. ¹¹ So the enemy took all the possessions of Sodom and Gomorrah, and all their provisions, and went their way. ¹² They also took Lot, the son of Abram's brother, who was dwelling in Sodom, and his possessions, and went their way.

¹³ Then one who had escaped came and told Abram the Hebrew, who was living by the oaks of Mamre the Amorite, brother of Eshcol and of Aner. These were allies of Abram. ¹⁴ When Abram heard that his kinsman had been taken captive, he led forth his trained men, born in his house, 318 of them, and went in pursuit as far as Dan.

¹⁵ And he divided his forces against them by night, he and his servants, and defeated them and pursued them to Hobah, north of Damascus. ¹⁶ Then he brought back all the possessions, and also brought back his kinsman Lot with his possessions, and the women and the people.

¹⁷ After his return from the defeat of Chedorlaomer and the kings who were with him, the king of Sodom went out to meet him at the Valley of Shaveh (that is, the King's Valley). ¹⁸ And Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. (He was priest of God Most High.) ¹⁹ And he blessed him and said,

“Blessed be Abram by God Most High,
Possessor of heaven and earth;
²⁰ and blessed be God Most High,
who has delivered your enemies into your hand!”

And Abram gave him a tenth of everything. ²¹ And the king of Sodom said to Abram, “Give me the persons, but take the goods for yourself.” ²² But Abram said to the king of Sodom, “I have lifted my hand to the LORD, God Most High, Possessor of heaven and earth, ²³ that I would not take a thread or a sandal strap or anything that is yours, lest you should say, ‘I have made Abram rich.’ ²⁴ I will take nothing but what the young men have eaten, and the share of the men who went with me. Let Aner, Eshcol, and Mamre take their share.”

To read more about redemption, see 1 Peter 2.

Day Two: Boaz Redeems Ruth

If you are unfamiliar with Ruth's story, get up to speed by watching this short video from The Bible Project before you read the introduction and Bible chapter that follows.

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/ruth/>

The story of Ruth's redemption at the hand of Boaz is one of the most beautiful and powerful stories in the entire Bible. Ruth and her mother-in-law, Naomi have, through no fault of their own, found themselves impoverished and destitute on the outskirts of society. Boaz, their nearest kinsman, puts his own resources on the line to restore Ruth and Naomi to a protected place within the safety of the kinship circle. Boaz is a figure of God the Father, who will one day lay everything he has on the line for us to bring us back into the safety of his very own family.

Ruth 3 and 4 (ESV)

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? ² Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

³ Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” ⁵ And she replied, “All that you say I will do.”

⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. ⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. ⁸ At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet!

⁹ He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.” ¹⁰ And he said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. ¹² And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. ¹³ Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.”

¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” ¹⁵ And he said, “Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

¹⁶ And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, ¹⁷ saying, “These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, ‘You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’ ” ¹⁸ She replied, “Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today.”

¹ Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, “Turn aside, friend; sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down. ² And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

³ Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. ⁴ So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.”

⁵ Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” ⁶ Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

⁷ Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. ⁸ So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew

off his sandal. ⁹ Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon.

¹⁰ Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.” ¹¹ Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, ¹² and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman.”

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! ¹⁵ He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

¹⁷ And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

¹⁸ Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, ²⁰ Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, ²¹ Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, ²² Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

To learn more about Ruth’s redemption, read this short book as a whole, Ruth 1-4.

Day Three: Hosea Redeems Gomer

Hosea

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/hosea/>

Today’s reading from the book of Hosea tells an incredible story of repeated forgiveness in the face of pain and broken covenant. This story illustrates with heartbreaking details another aspect of redemption: that of rescuing a family member “who found themselves enslaved by the consequences of a faithless life.” YHWH used the example of Hosea and Gomer’s marriage relationship to highlight the tumultuous “marriage” between himself and the house of Israel. Despite the unfaithfulness of his people, God’s love and devotion toward them was unyielding. The story of Gomer’s redemption looks ahead to the time that that the Father would buy back “his lost children by sending his eldest son, his heir, to give his life as a ransom for many (Mt. 20:28).”[1]

[1] Richter, Sandra, *The Epic of Eden: A Christian Entry into the Old Testament* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic), 45.

Hosea 1:1-11; 3:1-5 (ESV)

The word of the LORD that came to Hosea, the son of Beeri, in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah, and in the days of Jeroboam the son of Joash, king of Israel.

² When the LORD first spoke through Hosea, the LORD said to Hosea, “Go, take to yourself a wife of whoredom and have children of whoredom, for the land commits great whoredom by forsaking the LORD.” ³ So he went and took Gomer, the daughter of Diblaim, and she conceived and bore him a son.

⁴ And the LORD said to him, “Call his name Jezreel, for in just a little while I will punish the house of Jehu for the blood of Jezreel, and I will put an end to the kingdom of the house of Israel. ⁵ And on that day I will break the bow of Israel in the Valley of Jezreel.”

⁶ She conceived again and bore a daughter. And the LORD said to him, “Call her name No Mercy, for I will no more have mercy on the house of Israel, to forgive them at all. ⁷ But I will have mercy on the house of Judah, and I will save them by the LORD their God. I will not save them by bow or by sword or by war or by horses or by horsemen.”

⁸ When she had weaned No Mercy, she conceived and bore a son. ⁹ And the LORD said, “Call his name Not My People, for you are not my people, and I am not your God.”

¹⁰ Yet the number of the children of Israel shall be like the sand of the sea, which cannot be measured or numbered. And in the place where it was said to them, “You are not my people,” it shall be said to them, “Children of the living God.” ¹¹ And the children of Judah and the children of Israel shall be gathered together, and they shall appoint for themselves one head. And they shall go up from the land, for great shall be the day of Jezreel.

And the LORD said to me, “Go again, love a woman who is loved by another man and is an adulteress, even as the LORD loves the children of Israel, though they turn to other gods and love cakes of raisins.” ² So I bought her for fifteen shekels of silver and a homer and a lethech of barley.

³ And I said to her, “You must dwell as mine for many days. You shall not play the whore, or belong to another man; so will I also be to you.” ⁴ For the children of Israel shall dwell many days without king or prince, without sacrifice or pillar, without ephod or household gods. ⁵ Afterward the children of Israel shall return and seek the LORD their God, and David their king, and they shall come in fear to the LORD and to his goodness in the latter days.

To read more about redemption, see Isaiah. 44 and Hebrews. 9.

Day Four: The Messiah will Redeem God's People

The Messiah

<https://thebibleproject.com/explore/the-messiah/>

Knowing that Isaiah's ministry took place centuries before the coming of Christ, one can sense a deep longing in his tone in chapter 42. The prophet lived out the remainder of his life and ministry and saw only the waywardness of God's people without the coming of the

promised Messiah. Yet, from our perspective we know, the Messiah *did* come and and fulfilled exactly that for which Isaiah longed so many centuries before. Like the story of Abram and Lot from earlier in this week's readings, Yahweh presented himself as a patriarch who not only intended to redeem his lost family members, but sent his firstborn son to take up the redemptive work. Jesus not only brought redemption to the house of Israel, but brought God's redemptive plan to its highest expression by extending the opportunity to be redeemed into God's house to all people, everywhere.

Isaiah 42:1-25 (ESV)

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
2 He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
3 a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
4 He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth;
and the coastlands wait for his law.
5 Thus says God, the LORD,
who created the heavens and stretched them out,
who spread out the earth and what comes from it,
who gives breath to the people on it
and spirit to those who walk in it:
6 "I am the LORD; I have called you in righteousness;
I will take you by the hand and keep you;
I will give you as a covenant for the people,
a light for the nations,
7 to open the eyes that are blind,
to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon,
from the prison those who sit in darkness.
8 I am the LORD; that is my name;
my glory I give to no other,
nor my praise to carved idols.
9 Behold, the former things have come to pass,
and new things I now declare;
before they spring forth
I tell you of them."
10 Sing to the LORD a new song,
his praise from the end of the earth,
you who go down to the sea, and all that fills it,
the coastlands and their inhabitants.

- 11 Let the desert and its cities lift up their voice,
the villages that Kedar inhabits;
let the habitants of Sela sing for joy,
let them shout from the top of the mountains.
- 12 Let them give glory to the LORD,
and declare his praise in the coastlands.
- 13 The LORD goes out like a mighty man,
like a man of war he stirs up his zeal;
he cries out, he shouts aloud,
he shows himself mighty against his foes.
- 14 For a long time I have held my peace;
I have kept still and restrained myself;
now I will cry out like a woman in labor;
I will gasp and pant.
- 15 I will lay waste mountains and hills,
and dry up all their vegetation;
I will turn the rivers into islands,
and dry up the pools.
- 16 And I will lead the blind
in a way that they do not know,
in paths that they have not known
I will guide them.
I will turn the darkness before them into light,
the rough places into level ground.
These are the things I do,
and I do not forsake them.
- 17 They are turned back and utterly put to shame,
who trust in carved idols,
who say to metal images,
“You are our gods.”
- 18 Hear, you deaf,
and look, you blind, that you may see!
- 19 Who is blind but my servant,
or deaf as my messenger whom I send?
Who is blind as my dedicated one,
or blind as the servant of the LORD?
- 20 He sees many things, but does not observe them;
his ears are open, but he does not hear.
- 21 The LORD was pleased, for his righteousness’ sake,
to magnify his law and make it glorious.
- 22 But this is a people plundered and looted;
they are all of them trapped in holes

and hidden in prisons;
they have become plunder with none to rescue,
spoil with none to say, “Restore!”

- 23 Who among you will give ear to this,
will attend and listen for the time to come?
- 24 Who gave up Jacob to the looter,
and Israel to the plunderers?
Was it not the LORD, against whom we have sinned,
in whose ways they would not walk,
and whose law they would not obey?
- 25 So he poured on him the heat of his anger
and the might of battle;
it set him on fire all around, but he did not understand;
it burned him up, but he did not take it to heart.

To read more about Jesus’ redemption of humankind, see John 1; Rom. 5.

Day Five: Redemption in New Creation

Modern Christians often tend to think about our end-time redemption solely in terms of human souls. But Christian hope teaches us that God’s redemptive plan is also for human bodies (in the final resurrection) and in all of creation itself. At the return of Jesus, the dead will be raised to new life, heaven and earth will be rejoined, and all of creation will be redeemed under the reign of Jesus our king. From beginning to end the whole story of King Jesus — the gospel message itself — is one declaring that, in Jesus, God has inaugurated his redemptive plan to reconcile his human family back into his house and redeem creation.

Revelation 22:1-21 (ESV)

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb ² through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.

³No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. ⁴They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. ⁵And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

⁶And he said to me, “These words are trustworthy and true. And the Lord, the God of the spirits of the prophets, has sent his angel to show his servants what must soon take place.”

⁷“And behold, I am coming soon. Blessed is the one who keeps the words of the prophecy of this book.”

⁸ I, John, am the one who heard and saw these things. And when I heard and saw them, I fell down to worship at the feet of the angel who showed them to me, ⁹ but he said to me, “You must not do that! I am a fellow servant with you and your brothers the prophets, and with those who keep the words of this book. Worship God.”

¹⁰ And he said to me, “Do not seal up the words of the prophecy of this book, for the time is near. ¹¹ Let the evildoer still do evil, and the filthy still be filthy, and the righteous still do right, and the holy still be holy.”

¹² “Behold, I am coming soon, bringing my recompense with me, to repay each one for what he has done. ¹³ I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

¹⁴ Blessed are those who wash their robes, so that they may have the right to the tree of life and that they may enter the city by the gates. ¹⁵ Outside are the dogs and sorcerers and the sexually immoral and murderers and idolaters, and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.

¹⁶ “I, Jesus, have sent my angel to testify to you about these things for the churches. I am the root and the descendant of David, the bright morning star.”

¹⁷ The Spirit and the Bride say, “Come.” And let the one who hears say, “Come.” And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price.

¹⁸ I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, ¹⁹ and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.

²⁰ He who testifies to these things says, “Surely I am coming soon.” Amen. Come, Lord Jesus!

²¹ The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all. Amen.

To read more about the redemption of new creation, see Isaiah. 11; Romans 8:18-39; 1 Thessalonians. 4.