

***The Romance of Redemption:
The Kinsman-Redeemer
In the Book of Ruth***



by

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This syllabus has a dual purpose. First, it is designed to serve as a visual aid to help when following along with the audio tape or CD. It also has a wealth of additional information in footnotes that may provide many more hours of additional study as you work through the information and study the Book of Ruth in greater detail. God bless you.

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Introduction

The Book of Ruth gleams like a beautiful diamond on a jet-black velvet background.¹ This romance² of redemption takes place during the time of the judges, which was among the darkest days of the children of Israel. It also stands against the dark background of Ruth's own Moabite heritage. The truth of the Book of Ruth glistens even more brightly being set on such a backdrop.

Ruth forsook the idolatrous traditions of her people and became a believer in the One True God. She is a prototype of commitment and faithfulness, who sought her fulfillment as a mother through the righteous requirements of the Law. She was the only woman in the Old Testament called a virtuous woman. She was the great-grandmother of David, and she was one of only four women mentioned in the genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew.

The Book of Ruth provides us an exquisite look into life in Bible times. It is rich in Eastern customs. Without understanding levirate³ marriage, the laws of gleaning, and the role of the kinsman redeemer, an understanding of God's gracious working in the Book of Ruth would be missed.

The Book of Ruth is a masterpiece, a romance of redemption.

When Benjamin Franklin was United States Ambassador to France, he occasionally attended the Infidels Club—a group that spent most of its time searching for and reading literary masterpieces. On one occasion Franklin read the book of Ruth to the club when it was gathered together, but changed the names in it so it would not be recognized as a book of the Bible. When he finished, they were unanimous in their praise. They said it was one of the most beautiful short stories that they had ever heard, and demanded that he tell them where he had run across such a remarkable literary masterpiece. It was his great delight to tell them that it was from the Bible, which they professed to regard with scorn and derision, and in which they felt there was nothing good.⁴

Although some may describe his actions as a practical joke, Franklin's clever disguising

¹ McGee says, "The Book of Ruth is a pearl in the swine pen of the Judges." *Ruth: The Romance of Redemption*, McGee, J.V., Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1981, p. 20

² The romance genre refers to a prose narrative having romantic qualities such as heroism, adventure, mystery, etc. It is often characterized by strong personal sentiment, highly individualized feelings of affection, or the idealization of the beloved or the love relationship.

³ From the Latin meaning "husband's brother."

⁴ Steve Zeisler, *The Romance of Redemption* available online at: <http://www.pbc.org/dp/zeisler/4587.html>

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of the Book of Ruth got an honest reaction from the “so-called’ infidels. Despite their preconceived distain for the Bible, they too acknowledged Ruth as a literary masterpiece. However, it serves a much more important purpose than a fine example. It communicates the heart of our loving heavenly Father who, before the foundation of the world, set His heart on redeeming His people.

It is a beautiful love story of Ruth and Naomi, Ruth and Boaz, and ultimately God and His people. It is thrilling to see this romantic quest that begins in tragedy, end in jubilee. Her steadfast commitment to Naomi and her God makes Ruth worthy of esteem, and though she was widowed and hitherto barren, God blessed her with a husband and offspring.

Ruth’s love and care for her aging mother-in-law stands as a model for all generations. Her devotion is graciously rewarded as Boaz recognizes her sterling character and willingly performs the responsibility of a kinsman-redeemer.

Ruth and Esther are the only two books in the in the Bible named for women. Both deal with preservation. Esther was one of the children of Israel, and she married a gentile. She was significant in preserving Israel from destruction during an attempt to exterminate God’s people. Ruth was a gentile who married a man of the children of Israel. She perpetuated the believer’s line, being a critical element in Messianic genealogy, connecting the house of David with the tribe of Judah.⁵

The Book of Ruth is read annually by orthodox Jews on the Feast of Weeks, our Pentecost. This feast commemorates the giving of the law on Mount Sinai and also prophetically illustrated the redemption of the kinsman-redeemer, which was completed on the Day of Pentecost in 28 AD.

Key words and concepts:

There are a few key words and concepts to put in our minds before we begin our study. They will be important to note as we proceed:

1. “Returning” is a key word, occurring 15 times in Ruth. It is associated in Ruth with a concept of “rest” and “protection.” Naomi returns to Bethlehem to find rest. Naomi exhorts her daughters-in-law to return to their mother’s families to find rest, etc.⁶
2. “Grace” is a main theme of Ruth. There are two Hebrew words which communicate the idea. They are:
 - a. “*Chesed*” – “mercy” or “lovingkindness” “which speaks to loyalty borne out of love and kindness toward those to whom a person is responsible.”⁷ It refers to the fidelity of obligations or the “mutual liability of those...

⁵ Otherwise Jesus would not have been born in Bethlehem. See Micah 5:2.

⁶ The Book of Ruth shows God’s faithfulness to provide rest for His people according to His promise. (See Exodus 33:14; Deuteronomy 3:19,20; 12:8-11;; 25:19; Joshua 1:13-15;21:44; 22:4; 23:1; Hebrews 4:1ff.)

⁷ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Walwood, John F. and Zuck, Roy B., Chariot Victor Publishing, CO page 417.

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belonging together.”⁸ Although *chesed* refers to conduct in accordance with the rights and duties of mutual relationship between allies, it connotes “goodness or kindness...beyond what is expected or deserved, based solely on ready magnanimity towards others...”⁹ It has an element of permanence and reliability implicit in a family or a covenant between friends.¹⁰ It refers to conduct in accord with social norms, but that concept is not based on legal notions; it does not belong to legal terminology. The term is used of the virtue that ought to knit society together. This “loyal love” occurs three times in Ruth (1:8; 2:20; 3:10).

- b. “*Chen*” – “grace” or “favor” “which depicts a heartfelt response by someone who has something to give to one who has a need.” In 43 of the 69 uses it is associated with the phrases “in the eyes of” or “in the sight of.” Although the focus of attention of the giver is on the recipient of what is given...” *chen* emphasizes the source of the grace, the giver, not the recipient. It also occurs three times in Ruth (2:2,10,13). In addition to the uses of these words, the idea of grace is communicated in the interaction among the people.
3. “Redeem” and “kinsman redeemer” are used 23 times in Ruth and are the central theme around which the story revolves.

We will pay particular attention to figures of speech, which will direct us to that which God wants to call our attention and emphasize. Our study of the Book of Ruth will show how the Bible is an Eastern book and how understanding the customs and manners of the Eastern people aid tremendously in our understanding of it. We will also see clearly the “Red-Thread” of Jesus Christ woven into the very fabric of this book. The detailed presentation of a kinsman-redeemer looks forward to Jesus Christ, our kinsman-redeemer.

⁸ *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros*, Koehler, L. & Baumgartner, W. 1958

⁹ *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Botterweck, G. J. & Ringren, H., Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, Volume V, page 52, 53.

¹⁰ *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament*, Harris, R.L., Archer, G.L. & Waltke, B.K., Moody Press, Chicago, IL Volume I, page 305.

Chapter One – Love’s Resolve Returning to Bethlehem¹¹

As Ruth opens we get some important background information.

Ruth 1:1,2:

Now it came to pass in the days¹² when the judges ruled [This was a dark time in the history of Israel in which every man did that which was right in his own eyes.¹³], that there was a famine in the land.¹⁴ And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah¹⁵ went¹⁶ to sojourn [They weren’t going to stay there for an extended period of time. This was supposed to be temporary.] in the country of Moab¹⁷ [because of the famine.], he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech,¹⁸ and the name of his wife Naomi,¹⁹ and the name of his two sons Mahlon²⁰ and Chilion,²¹ Ephrathites²² of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

They went to sojourn, but ended up staying longer. While they continued in Moab, tragedy struck.

Ruth 1:3-5:

And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah,²³ and the name of the other Ruth:²⁴ and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman [Naomi] was left of her two sons and her husband.

Things have gone from bad to worse for Naomi. Not only had she lost her husband, but she also lost both of her sons in untimely deaths. If the family name were to continue there had to be an heir, but she is apparently without hope of that occurring. However,

¹¹ “Commitment” is an underlying theme of chapter one.

¹² “Now it came to pass in the days” is used five times in the Old Testament (Genesis 14:1; Ruth 1:1; Esther 1:1; Isaiah 7:1; and Jeremiah 1:3). It denotes impending trouble followed by deliverance and a “happy ending.” See note in the Companion Bible and Dake’s Annotated Bible.

¹³ See Judges 17:6; 21:25. The Book of Judges ends with that statement.

¹⁴ Some scholars suggest that this is the famine of Judges 6:1-6. (e.g. *Biblical Commentary on the Old Testament: Joshua, Judges, Ruth*, Keil, C.F. & Delitzsch, F., Hendrickson Publishers, 1996, p.343)

¹⁵ Used seven times in Ruth. “Bethlehem” means “house of bread.” It was the birthplace of the “Bread of Life.” The first two occurrences identify the city as being the one in Judah, not the one in Zebulun.

¹⁶ This is the first of fifteen occurrences of the Hebrew “yalak,” to go, walk, come, or proceed.”

¹⁷ Moab was the eldest son of Lot from the incestuous relationship with his daughter. Psalms 108:9 calls Moab a “washpot.” Fourteen different forms of the word occur in Ruth.

¹⁸ “Elimelech” means “God is my King.” It occurs six times in Ruth and only in Ruth.

¹⁹ “Naomi” means “my delight” or “pleasant.” It is used 21 times in Ruth and only in Ruth.

²⁰ “Mahlon means “sick” or “unhealthy. It is used 4 times in Ruth and only in Ruth.

²¹ “Chilion” means “pining away” or “puny.” It is used 3 times in Ruth and only in Ruth

²² Ephrath was an ancient name for Bethlehem. Ephrathites is used here of one from Bethlehem. See Micah 5:2 and I Samuel 17:12.

²³ “Orpah” means “gazelle” or “fawn.” It is used 2 times in Ruth and only in Ruth.

²⁴ “Ruth” means “friendship” or “beauty.” It is used 12 times in Ruth, only once more in Matthew.

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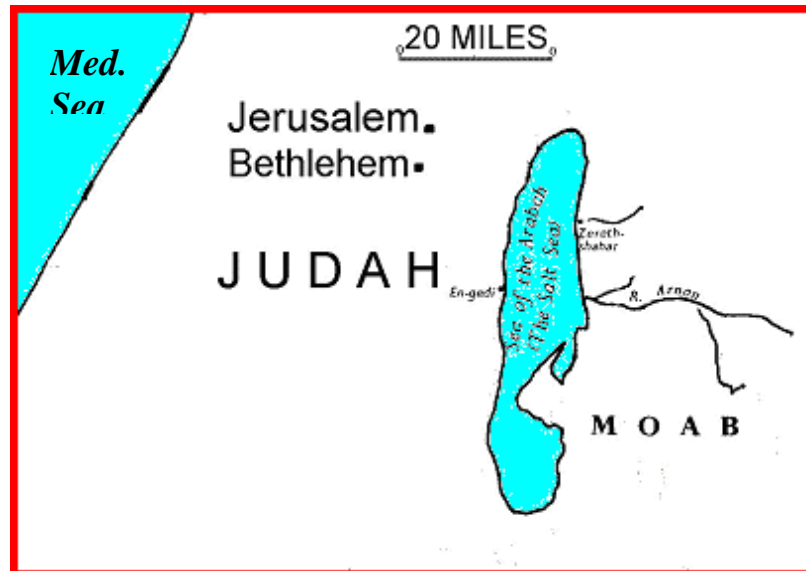
she hears that God has provided for His people again, and Naomi makes a very important decision to return to Bethlehem.

Naomi's decision to return to Bethlehem: It is interesting how often biblical records turn on or revolve around specific decisions of will.²⁵ Naomi's decision to return from Moab is a turning point in her life. God emphasizes the importance of that decision by repeating "return" (Hebrew, *shub*) twelve times in chapter one.²⁶

Ruth 1:6,7:

Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might **return**^{1st} [*shub*] from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD [Jehovah]²⁷ had visited his people in giving them bread. [The famine is over; God has once again provided for His people.]

Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to **return**^{2nd} [*shub*] unto the land of Judah.



²⁵ For example, in Exodus 3:3 Moses after seeing the burning bush said, "I will now turn aside and see this great sight...." In I Samuel 17:32 David after hearing the taunting of Goliath said, "Let no man's heart fail because of him, thy servant shall go and fight with this Philistine." In Nehemiah 2:5 after hearing about the devastation of Jerusalem and praying about it Nehemiah said to the king, "If thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it." In Esther 4:16 after Mordecai asked her to intercede on behalf of her people Esther said to him, "Go, gather together all the Jews that are present in Shushan, and fast ye for me, and neither eat nor drink three days, night or day: I also and my maidens will fast likewise; and so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the law: and if I perish, I perish." In Isaiah 6:8 after hearing the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Isaiah said, "Here am I; send me." Making the right choices is very important to God (Deuteronomy 30:19).

²⁶ It occurs fifteen times in the entire book.

²⁷ "Jehovah" is the name of God that emphasizes His covenantal relationship with the Children of Israel. He is the Eternal One Who is faithful to uphold His covenant promises to His people. It is used 18 times in Ruth. "Shaddai," "Almighty," occurs twice in Ruth 1:20 and 21. Elohim occurs three times of the True God and once of false gods (1:15,16²; 2:12).

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Naomi heard that God had once again provided for His people, and knew the only reasonable thing to do was to return to the Land of Promise and seek relief among her people. All three started the trip to Bethlehem, but as they are on the way, Naomi considers that it might not be best for her daughters-in-law to go back with her. She is so thankful for them and how they have been so kind to her, but she constrains²⁸ them to stay in Moab and not return with her.

Ruth 1:8,9:

And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, **return**^{3rd} [*shub*] [This is the first request.] each to her mother's house: the LORD deal **kindly**²⁹ [*chesed*] with you, as ye have dealt with the dead [Mahlon and Chilion], and with me.

The LORD grant you that ye may find rest,³⁰ each *of you* in the house of her [next] husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

Verse 9 is a wonderful example of speaking a blessing. One's knowledge of the covenant that Jehovah entered into with His people, allows one to speak His blessing. What He said He would do, He performs. People who took God at His Word and knew His Word would speak blessings to one another.³¹

Naomi acknowledges how her daughters have been so kind to her, and requests of the Lord that he do the same for them. The Hebrew word for "kindly" is "*chesed*." It is an important theme in Ruth and throughout the entire Old Testament. It occurs nearly 250 times and is also translated "mercy," "kindness," and "lovingkindness." It speaks of God's covenant loyalty to His people. It involves grace in that it was extended even though it was not deserved. Although her daughters were both Moabitesses, they married men of Israel and therefore Naomi felt that the Lord would return their kindnesses to them.

Naomi wants each of them to return to their own mother's house so that they can find rest in the house of another husband. She is well aware of the difficulty an unmarried woman endured in the east. Marriage meant security in the Bible lands, and Naomi felt that their best opportunity for it was to remain in Moab.

Ruth 1:10-13:

And they said unto her, Surely we **will return**^{4th} [*shub*] with thee unto thy people. And Naomi said, **Turn again**^{5th} [*shub*], my daughters: [This is the second time.] why will ye go with me? *are* there yet *any more* sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? [She got no response to that question.]

Turn again^{6th} [*shub*] [the third time], my daughters, go *your way*; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, *if* I should have an husband

²⁸ In the orient the custom of constraining would occur when a request or offer was extended three or more times. Each request would be accompanied by a reason to constrain the individual to accept or comply.

²⁹ This is the first of three uses of *chesed* in Ruth. It refers to the goodness, kindness, and faithfulness that one extends to another. They are kindnesses rendered out of loyalty to one to whom accountability and responsibility are due. Although the word only occurs three times this kind and gracious way of interacting is seen throughout Ruth in the activities of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz.

³⁰ "Rest" occurs three times in Ruth (1:9; 3:1,18) and each is a different Hebrew word.

³¹ This occurs several times in Ruth (1:9; 2:4,12,19,20; 3:10; 4:11,12,14,15).

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also to night, and should also bear sons;
Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? Nay [Do you hear a note of finality in that?], my daughters; for it grieveth [makes me bitter; it will come up again in verse 19] me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.

Naomi has almost given up hope. She has taken responsibility for the calamity and has become disheartened. It sounds almost as if she is being sarcastic, but in verse 11 she alludes to the levirate marriage practice which God put in the law to help in situations like this.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10:

If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: [outside of the family] her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.

And it shall be, *that* the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother *which is* dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.³²

Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and *if* he stand *to it*, and say, I like not to take her;

Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. [Please note that it was the widow's responsibility to confront the *levir* before the elders.] And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

Naomi made her point very clearly. There were no more husbands for them if they stayed with her. Their best opportunity to find another was to stay in Moab.

Ruth 1:14:

And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave³³ unto her.

Ruth's resolve to stay with Naomi: Orpah obeyed Naomi's request and returned, but Ruth did not. Orpah goes back, off the pages of Scripture, into oblivion, never to be heard of again. Ruth clung to Naomi and chose to follow her and care for her, rather than to return and seek a husband as Naomi suggested. However, Naomi still presses her to go

³² The duty to marry the widow of a deceased kinsman was only obligatory on a brother-in-law. In the case of a *goel* who was not a brother it was not until he redeemed the property of his relative, dying without a son, that he was under obligation to marry the widow. The law had expressly imposed the duty of marriage on the *levir* only, and beyond him the obligation did not extend.

³³ Ruth clave to Naomi. The word *clave* is the same as in Genesis 2:24. Ruth forsook both her natural father and mother to go with Naomi.

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back.

Ruth 1:15:

And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is **gone back**^{7th} [*shub*] unto her people, and unto her gods [*elohim*]: **return**^{8th} [*shub*] thou after thy sister in law.

Naomi points out that this decision is indeed life-changing. If Ruth returned with her to Bethlehem it would mean forsaking the people and the gods she had grown up with. Naomi is looking from the perspective of what she could do for Ruth. She felt she could do nothing, so she suggests that Ruth return to her previous life. Ruth, however, does not selfishly opt for getting her need met. Indeed she wanted to help Naomi. Naomi had been such a blessing to her, and she wants to give back to her for all she has done. Ruth loved Naomi and that was worth holding on to. There are some relationships based on the greatness of God's Word that you should never forsake. She realized that she may never marry again, but the relationship she had with Naomi was too special to terminate. This is a relationship of extraordinary commitment and love. This relationship has substance and a future. There would be meaning and fulfillment there, because there was an abundance of love there.

Ruth 1:16,17:

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to **return**^{9th} [*shub*] from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God [*Elohim*] my God [*Elohim*]: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD [Jehovah, Ruth had entered into a covenant relationship with Him, making the God of Israel her God] do so to me, and more also,³⁴ *if ought* but death part thee and me.

Verses sixteen and seventeen have to be one of the most beautiful expressions of commitment that has ever been made. Ruth abandoned her people and forsook her past and declared allegiance to the people and God of Israel. Naomi realized how great Ruth's love for her was and how she longed to learn of her people and of her God.

God works in our lives through committed relationships. Our families are the primary laboratories of our character development. Relationships where little commitment is placed yield little reward. Relationships where there is much commitment yield great rewards. To live meaningful lives we need loving relationships. Without responsibility and accountability there will be little growth and development. Naomi and Ruth would get so much out of their relationship because they put so much into it.

From whom had Ruth learned of the Lord and His people? (From her husband and Naomi, of course!) That helps to explain her love and commitment. She knew that the Lord God of Israel would provide for her.³⁵ She knew that Naomi was shaken to the very

³⁴ This is the first occurrence of a frequently recurring oath by which the person swearing would call down upon himself a severe punishment should he not keep his word and carry out his resolution. See also I Samuel 3:17; 14:44; 20:13; 25:22; II Samuel 3:9,35; 19:13; I Kings 2:23; 19:2; 20:10; II Kings 6:31.

³⁵ This is the reputation that went with her into the Promised Land. In Boaz's first conversation with her, he mentions her trust in the Lord (2:11,12).

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core of her being, and she wants to help her through the difficult times. She commits herself to Naomi and pledges that only death will separate them.

Ruth 1:18:

When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

Naomi had pushed her as much as she could, and now she knew it was proper for Ruth to go with her. Ruth's resolve to accompany and care for Naomi has been recorded for posterity to see and learn from.

A new start: Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem and cause quite a stir.

Ruth 1:19-21:

So they two (Orpah didn't make it to Bethlehem.) went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved³⁶ about them, and they said, *Is this Naomi?* [They did not forget her.] And she said unto them, Call me [Both the words "them" and "call" are in the feminine gender; Naomis was speaking to the women; they will come up again in chapter 4.] not Naomi,³⁷ call me Mara [bitterness; see Exodus 15:22-27]: for the Almighty [*Shaddai*]³⁸ hath dealt very bitterly [In the Hebrew the verb "to deal bitterly" is in the perfect tense indicating the action has been completed.] with me. [She is saying in essence, I am not the same person I was when I left.] I went out full (This most likely does not refer to wealth, but rather family.), and the LORD **hath brought me home again**^{10th} [*shub*] empty: [Sounds a bit like the prodigal son in Luke 15.] why *then* call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty [*Shaddai*] hath afflicted me?

The verbs communicating God's action in verses 20 and 21 ("dealt bitterly," "brought me home again," "testified against me," and "afflicted me") are in the perfect mood, meaning the action has been completed. She wasn't simply bitter, blaming God for what had happened.³⁹ She has "come to grips" with her past and is actually putting the trouble she has experienced into the past. She has accepted responsibility for what happened and is

³⁶ This was quite an uproar. This Hebrew word for "moved" is only used six times in the Old Testament. Its next occurrence, translated "rang again" is in I Samuel 4:5 which says, "And when the ark of the covenant of the LORD came into the camp, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth **rang again.**"

³⁷ In Eastern culture, to receive a new name signified a change in character and destiny. (e.g. Abram to Abraham (Genesis 17:5-8); Jacob to Israel (Genesis 32:29); Simon to Peter (Matthew 16:17,18), etc. However, this is Naomi's evaluation of the situation, not God's. God didn't change her name. She continues to be called Naomi throughout the book not Mara.

³⁸ *Shaddai* is only used 48 times in the Old Testament and 31 of those are in the Book of Job. *Shaddai* is the name of God that emphasizes Him as the All-bountiful Source of grace, the Giver Who supplies all the need of His people. In this context in Ruth, the emphasis is on that fact that Naomi believed that the Almighty could supply, even though it did not happen. She uses the name *Shaddai* to emphasize the reason for her affliction was not due to God's inability or lack.

³⁹ Remember the Hebrew idiom of permission. God allowed these things to happen. He did not desire or cause them to happen. For further explanation see Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech in the Bible*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1968, page 823 and *Living in God's Power - Part II*, Appendix 2.

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closing the door on that chapter of her life. She is now expecting things to change. That's why she returned.

“Hath brought me home again” is the Hebrew, *shub*. However, this is the only one of the first twelve occurrences that is in the Hiphil conjugation. The other 14 are in the Kal. The Kal is simple active, and Hiphil is causative active. In the simple active we found it translated “return,” “turn again,” and “go back.” Each of these referred to what the women did, the actions they took. This occurrence in verse 21 refers to what the Lord did. He “brought her home again” or “caused her to return.”

Just how did he do that? Did he drive them like cattle from Moab? Did He overstep their free will, and make them come back even though they did not want to? He caused them to return the same way he causes us to return when we stray from where we should be. He called them back with His Word.

Remember verse six said, “she arose... for she had heard... that the Lord visited His people.” What did she hear? Words from God. How did they get to her? I don't know. It's not important or God would have told us.⁴⁰ The point is the Lord got the word to her, and she responded to it by her freewill choice.⁴¹ God guided her through His Word. It is important to keep our ears open and be attentive to the still small voice of God.

Ruth 1:22:

So Naomi **returned**^{11th} [*shub*], and Ruth the Moabitess,⁴² her daughter in law, with her, which **returned**^{12th} [*shub*] out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

“So Naomi returned.” The second occurrence of “return” in verse 22 and the verb “came” are both in the perfect mood, indicating the action has been completed. They are finally back in Bethlehem, and they expect things to change. The Lord had provided for His people, and they were there to claim their portion of it.

Naomi has returned to her inheritance in Israel in the beginning of the barley harvest. What happened at the beginning of the barley harvest? Passover was celebrated. They got home in time to celebrate Passover. When they arrived, Naomi was recognized and greeted by the local women. In her grief, she declared that she “returned empty.” But, did Naomi really return empty? In her devastated state, that was her assessment of the situation. Perhaps they carried all they owned, but she was not alone, Ruth is with her. In great grief we seem to always make things worse than they really are. She may have only had that which she could carry, but she had Ruth, and that will prove to be very important in the success of the return and restoration of Naomi.

⁴⁰ The Targums say that an angel talked to Naomi and gave her this information. See note in Dake's Annotated Reference Bible.

⁴¹ Psalms 107:20:

⁴² Ruth was called a Moabitess five times. The Hebrew word appears seven times in Ruth (Ruth 1:4,22; 2:2,6,21;4:5,10. Bullinger and others make the point that Deuteronomy 23:3 which prohibits a Moabite from ever entering into the congregation of the Lord refers to Moabite in the masculine gender and thus excludes Ruth from the prohibition. Similarly Deuteronomy forbids marriage to seven nations, but does not include Moab in the list.

Chapter Two – Love’s Response Gleaning in the Fields of Boaz⁴³

Chapter two opens by introducing another of the major characters in this beautiful love story, the mighty man, Boaz.

Ruth 2:1:

And Naomi had a kinsman⁴⁴ of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth,⁴⁵ of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.⁴⁶ [Boaz means “in him is strength.”]

“Mighty man” is the Hebrew, “*gibbor*.” It denotes one who is “mighty, strong, or valiant.” It is frequently used of the heroes or champions among the armed forces.⁴⁷ As we will soon see Boaz will be the hero of this story.

Ruth’s response:

Ruth 2:2:

And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now **go**⁴⁸ [*yalak*] [This is Ruth’s first request in chapter two. It is made to Naomi.] to the field, and **glean**^{1st} ears of corn [used generically of the small grains of the barley harvest] after him in whose sight I shall find grace [*chen*].⁴⁹ And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.

Ruth makes the first of three requests in chapter two here of Naomi. She asks for permission to glean. Gleaning is a major theme of chapter two, and we find it used 12 times in this chapter.

In the Eastern custom of gleaning,⁵⁰ God provided⁵¹ for strangers, widows, and the fatherless by limiting landowners to make only one pass through their harvest. That which remained was to be reserved for those who had need. God also instructed His people to leave crops standing in the corners of the field so that those in need could glean and provide for themselves. Ruth is acting responsibly to procure support for her and Naomi. She was acting upon the law of God that provided for people in situations in which she found herself.

⁴³ The underlying theme of chapter two is “grace.”

⁴⁴ The word kinsman is a rather unique word. It is used only here and in Proverbs 7:4, where it is used figuratively of “understanding.” It is used of an acquaintance or friend, who also happened to be related to the family of Elimelech, in this case.

⁴⁵ “Wealth” is more commonly translated “army,” “host,” “valor,” “strength.” It is the word translated virtuous when used of Ruth. It occurs three times in Ruth (2:1; 3:11; 4:11).

⁴⁶ Boaz means “in him is strength.” It is the name given to one of the pillars of the temple.

⁴⁷ It is used of Gideon (Judges 6:12), Jephthah (Judges 11:1), David (I Samuel 16:18), etc.

⁴⁸ This is the tenth of fifteen uses of *yalak* in the Book of Ruth. Ruth is certainly a book of action.

⁴⁹ This is the first of three uses of *chen* (similar to *chesed*) indicating grace or favor. The first occurrence is in Genesis 6:8 where “Noah found grace in the eyes of the LORD.”

⁵⁰ God had set things up so that the unfortunate could work and eat. See II Thessalonians 3:10.

⁵¹ When God provided manna from heaven, He instructed His people to gather it using the same Hebrew word translated “glean.” It occurs nine times in Exodus 16:4-27.

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Deuteronomy 24:19-21:⁵²

When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean *it* afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

Appropriating the Lord's provision and following the custom of the day, Ruth puts on her bonnet and apron and heads to the fields to glean. She puts her trust in the Lord and expects to find grace in the sight of the lord of the harvest. She is acting on the Word she knows that pertains to her situation and depending on God's grace.

Ruth 2:3:

And she [Ruth] went, and came, and **gleaned**^{2nd} in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.

Since Boaz was introduced into the record in verse one, we know that Ruth ending up in his field was not by chance. Although it says, "her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging to Boaz," don't let the Old English fool you. Yes, it happened that she ended up in Boaz's field, but it was by divine design. God emphasizes this "chance" meeting with the figure of speech, polyptoton.⁵³

The phrase "her hap, *miqreh*, was to light on, *qarah*..." contains the polyptoton. *Miqreh* means an unforeseen meeting, event, accident, or happening. It comes from the root word *qarah* which means, "to encounter or meet."⁵⁴ This repetition of the same part of speech in different inflections emphasizes the encounter. Do you think this encounter was a coincidence? I don't. I see God's hand in it. I agree with the anonymous quote I heard that handles these kind of coincidences: "Coincidence is a miracle in which God wants to remain anonymous."

Remember the Bible is an Eastern book, and most sources I have checked conclude that the idea of fate or chance is utterly foreign to the Hebrew mind.⁵⁵ This was not a chance encounter; this is the hand of God guiding Ruth. She was believing to find grace in someone's eyes, and God directs her to the right place.

Proverbs 16:9:

A man's heart deviseth his way: but the Lord directeth his steps.

Ruth devised a plan, and God directed her steps. Ruth was believing to find grace in the

⁵² See also Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22, and Job 24:10.

⁵³ Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1968 page 267.

⁵⁴ *The New Brown, Driver, Briggs, Gesenius Hebrew/Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*.

⁵⁵ See Trever, George Henry, *International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, "Chance."

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sight of the lord of the harvest, and she does. However, first she found grace in the eyes of the Lord who directed her to the right field.

Ruth 2:4:

And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD *be* with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

“Behold” is the figure of speech asterismos.⁵⁶ It calls our attention to the arrival of Boaz. Look at the timing of this trip; this is not by chance. Look at the blessing that Boaz speaks to his reapers, and look at their response to bless him in return. Regardless of how the rest of Israel was doing, these were God-fearing men who want God’s best for each other.⁵⁷

What do our greetings communicate to those we meet? Is it just simply a “Hello!” or do we dare extend God’s blessings to them. Does our handshake or embrace really communicate that we honestly care about the person and desire God’s best for them?

Ruth’s diligence:

Ruth 2:5-9:

Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? [She had caught his eye, but he didn’t recognize her.]

And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It *is* the Moabitish damsel that **came back**^{13th} [*shub*] with Naomi out of the country of Moab:

And she said, I pray you, let me **glean**^{3rd} [This was her second request. This one is of the foreman.] and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued [steadfastly] even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. [The foreman recognized how polite and honorable Ruth was. He said, “She showed up early and has worked hard all day.” She had gotten a good report from this chief servant.]

Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not [“listen carefully” in the New American Standard Version], my daughter? Go not to **glean**^{4th} in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

Let thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of *that* which the young men have drawn.

Boaz addressed Ruth as “my daughter” because of the age difference between them. He extends to her some wonderful kindnesses. He invites her to follow along with the reapers. She did not need to wait until they had left the field, as was customary, before she went in to glean. Boaz made sure that she was treated properly and respectfully by his workers, and he also allowed her to drink from the water provided for the workers. Boaz was being gracious far beyond what the law required.

⁵⁶ Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1968 page 926.

⁵⁷ This kind of greeting of mutual blessings was common place among God’s people. When it was not done something was wrong. See Psalms 129:8.

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Ruth 2:10:

Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace [*chen*] in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of [pay attention to, notice, regard] me, seeing I *am* a stranger? [Gentile]

Ruth had been expecting gracious treatment (2:2), but she is still amazed when it comes. Ruth responds with humility to the gracious treatment. She shows respect by bowing, and then recognizes the gracious treatment of the lord of the harvest with a question. She was eager to find out why she was treated so graciously.

When it comes to grace, asking “Why?” can get kind of “slippery.” Since by definition grace is unearned, the reason cannot be found in the actions of the recipient, but rather in the heart and character of the giver. In the first 40 occurrences of *chen*, grace, in the Old Testament, it follows the verb “to find.” It is not until the Book of Esther that it says Esther “obtained grace,” three times.

Ruth 2:11,12:

And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and *how* thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God [*Elohim*] of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.⁵⁸

Don’t misunderstand, verse 11 is not given as the reason for his gracious treatment. We do not earn grace by good behavior. The real reason is given in verse 12. Ruth trusted in God, and God had initiated the gracious treatment. God had touched Boaz’s heart, and Boaz blesses her. Boaz also suggests that she hasn’t seen anything yet and that this gracious treatment will continue until a “full reward” is realized.

What a wonderful blessing that Boaz spoke. That was Boaz’s believing image of victory for Ruth. “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” Does God have wings? No, this is the figure of speech, *condescensio*⁵⁹. God is comparing Himself to a mother bird protecting and caring for her young under her expansive wings. What a vivid picture it communicates of Him in Whom she trusted. (This will come up again in Chapter 3.) Little did he know at this time how much he would be involved in bringing this to pass.

Ruth 2:13:

Then she said, Let me find favour [*chen*] in thy sight [This is her third request, and this one is of Boaz.], my lord [*adon*, Boaz was the lord of the harvest.]; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine

⁵⁸ Boaz wasn’t being gracious to Ruth because she “earned it” by her diligent care for her mother. Her action demonstrated her trust in the Lord. She was being treated graciously by Boaz because God worked in his heart to do so. It was her trust in Jehovah that was being rewarded. (See also Deuteronomy 32:11; Psalms 36:7; 57:1; 91:4.)

⁵⁹ Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible*, Grand Rapids, Baker Book House, 1968 page 871.

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handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

Ruth is saying, “You treated me like one of your own workers, even though I am not. She continued to respond humbly. She took comfort in his blessing, and, recognizing the position he was in, she requests that his kindness continue. Although she acknowledges she has no right to make such a request, she was bold in asking that his favor continue. Her well-mannered response is again met with gracious words from Boaz.

Ruth 2:14:

And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched *corn*, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

Look at the personal care of the lord of the harvest. Boaz invited her to come and dine with the reapers and even provided for her himself, making sure she had more than enough so she had some to take home to Naomi. Ruth accepted this additional kindness, and after she ate, she returned to the field to glean. She continued to hold Boaz’s attention, and he directs his servants to extend further kindnesses unto her.

Ruth 2:15,16:

And when she was risen up to **glean**,^{5th} Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her **glean**^{6th} even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also *some* of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may **glean**^{7th} *them*, and rebuke her not.

Boaz instructed his workman to leave handfuls on purpose for her, but to do it so that she was unaware of it. The grace that was extended to her went far beyond that, of which Ruth was even aware. Boaz was intent on seeing that she was provided for. Neither was he concerned that people knew about it.

Ruth 2:17:

So she **gleaned**^{8th} in the field until even, and beat out that she had **gleaned**;^{9th} and it was about an ephah of barley.

Ruth continued in the field until evening. Then she willowed the grain separating the chaff. An ephah was about half a bushel, a truly generous amount for a day’s work. It would have weighed about 25 pounds and been enough food to last for quite some time.

Ruth 2:18:

And she took *it* up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had **gleaned**:^{10th} and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed.

Ruth brought what she had gleaned to Naomi as well as the food she had left over from the meal with the reapers. Naomi is elated with the abundance and blessed the one who took knowledge of Ruth before even finding out who it was.

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Ruth 2:19,20:

And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou **gleaned**^{11th} to day? [This is not a casual question. Naomi was impressed.] and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz.

And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who hath not left off his **kindness** [*chesed*] to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man *is* near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.⁶⁰ [Key plot element.]

Naomi explains to Ruth that Boaz is near of kin and qualifies as the *goel*, the kinsman redeemer. Responsibilities of the *goel* include the repurchase of a field, which was sold in time of need (Leviticus 25:25-28) and the freeing of an Israelite slave who sold himself in time of poverty (Leviticus 25:48-55). Such purchase and restitution was the duty of the next of kin.

Ruth 2:21-22:

And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, *It is* good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field.⁶¹

Ruth has more good news for Naomi. Boaz not only dealt so kindly with her on this first morning, but also offered to watch over her throughout the entire harvest. Naomi encouraged Ruth to do as Boaz said and not venture anywhere else. Ruth's loyalty and love for Naomi is evidenced in that she obeyed Naomi and stayed in the fields of Boaz.

Ruth 2:23:

So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to **glean**^{12th} unto the end of barley harvest (around the time of Passover) and of wheat harvest (around the time of Pentecost); and dwelt with her mother in law.

The beginning of the barley harvest was at Passover, and the beginning of the wheat harvest was at Pentecost. So the time period covered here was at least 50 days. This gracious treatment was extended more than 50 days.

Ruth trusted God and found grace in the eyes of Boaz. She believed for it to happen before she went out, and when she encountered it, she graciously recognized it. She was even bold enough to ask for it to continue. Why should we ever think that God's grace would be any less sufficient for us? His grace will never be exhausted! We should, like Ruth, expect it to continue.

Naomi is much more blessed at the end of chapter two than she was at the end of chapter

⁶⁰ This is the first of 21 occurrences of "*gaal*," "kinsman-redeemer."

⁶¹ More literally "that they do not fall upon thee," which signifies smiting or mistreating someone. The New Berkeley Version in Modern English translates it, "so you will not be molested in another field."

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one. She returned expecting things to change, and they already have. She has been blessed by the Lord, Who graciously remembered her in her affliction. However, the plot is about to thicken.

They had been provided for during the harvest, but what would happen to the widows after the harvests?⁶² Ruth would obediently do as Naomi directed until the end of the harvest. That would give Naomi enough time to plan and prepare for what was yet to come.

⁶² Perhaps Ruth did glean enough food to last through the winter, but where would they stay and how would they continue to support themselves?

Chapter Three – Love’s Request Asking for Rest⁶³

Naomi and Ruth have been blessed throughout the harvest time. Naomi’s response to Ruth’s lovingkindness and hard work on her behalf is in chapter three where she orchestrates the performance of the duty of the kinsman-redeemer.

Ruth 3:1:

Then Naomi her mother in law **said**⁶⁴ [*amar*]^{1st} unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee [Remember 1:9?], **that it may be well with thee?**

Naomi wants the best for Ruth so she wants to arrange a marriage for her. This phrase “that it may be well with thee” occurs five times in the King James Version.⁶⁵

Deuteronomy 6:1-3,17,18:

Now these *are* the commandments, the statutes, and the judgments, which the LORD your God commanded to teach you, that ye might do *them* in the land whither ye go to possess it:

That thou mightest fear the LORD thy God, to keep all his statutes and his commandments, which I command thee, thou, and thy son, and thy son’s son, all the days of thy life; and that thy days may be prolonged.

Hear therefore, O Israel, and observe to do *it*; **that it may be well with thee**, and that ye may increase mightily, as the LORD God of thy fathers hath promised thee, in the land that floweth with milk and honey....

Ye shall diligently keep the commandments of the LORD your God, and his testimonies, and his statutes, which he hath commanded thee.

And thou shalt do *that which is* right and good in the sight of the LORD: **that it may be well with thee**, and that thou mayest go in and possess the good land which the LORD sware unto thy fathers,

Naomi expected the best for Ruth because she knew her daughter-in-law was diligent to observe and do the law. (Remember the blessing she spoke in 1:8?) Naomi was aware of Ruth’s adherence to one commandment in particular.

Deuteronomy 5:16:

Honour thy father and thy mother, as the LORD thy God hath commanded thee; that thy days may be prolonged, and that it may go well with thee, in the land which the LORD thy God giveth thee.

⁶³ The underlying theme of chapter three is “trust” or “obedience.”

⁶⁴ Chapters one and two had clusters of “return” and “glean” for emphasis. Chapter three is “bookended” with statements by Naomi to Ruth in which she spoke of “rest.” The Hebrew word “*amar*,” “said,” occurs 13 times in chapter three. It occurs 54 times in the book of Ruth. This should come as no surprise, seeing that so much of the Book of Ruth is dialog between the individuals involved. With God’s help Naomi develops a plan and speaks it into being. James 4:2 says, Ye have not, because ye ask not. “Not asking” is not going to keep these women from receiving God’s best; they will ask for rest.

⁶⁵ See also Jeremiah 42:6 and Ephesians 6:3.

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God gave us His Word so things would go well for us in life. In His Word He declared His will, which is always good, acceptable, and perfect.⁶⁶ It is a lamp unto our feet and a light unto our path.⁶⁷ When we meditate upon it and order our steps in it, we will have “good success.”

In chapter one God caused Naomi to return to Bethlehem by getting His Word to her. In chapter two, the Word provided the basis for Ruth to go into the field of Boaz to glean. We will see as we get into chapter three, that the Word will provide the basis for the request Ruth will make of Boaz.

Naomi discloses the plan: Naomi wants things to go well for Ruth so she has devised a plan according to the law regarding the kinsman-redeemer. She has seen things develop over the course of time she has been in Bethlehem, and God is working in her heart. She doesn't simply wait passively for things to happen, she seizes the opportunity when it presents itself. When God opens doors for us we must recognize them and be willing to walk through them. God frequently carries out his work through believers who take hold of unexpected opportunities.

Ruth 3:2:

And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? **Behold**, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.

Here is that figure of speech, asterismos, again. It provides the foundation upon which Naomi's plan of verses 3 and 4 is based. If he is not there, the plan will not work. This is the occasion for which Naomi had been waiting. It has arrived, and it is now time to act. Naomi now discloses her plan to Ruth.

Ruth 3:3,4:

Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but* make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.

And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.

It was the custom in Bible times for parents to arrange marriages for their children, and Naomi resolves to seek rest and security for her daughter-in-law, Ruth, in marriage. Boaz was near of kin and could perform the responsibility of a kinsman-redeemer. He was a God-fearing man who had shown great kindness to Ruth already.

When winnowing barley the grain was taken to the threshing floor, which was usually the highest point on the property, where there was a good, strong wind. By bringing the grain to the high point for threshing, it allowed the wind to carry the chaff away as the workers winnowed it. They would end up with two piles. The closer one with the grain,

⁶⁶ Romans 12:2.

⁶⁷ Psalms 119:105

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and the one further downwind with the chaff. The grain was garnered, and the chaff was burned.



On the last night of the harvest, the owner would throw a party for all the workers, to celebrate the end of harvest. They would party and go home the next morning. It would be a great time of rejoicing together, with singing, dancing, and eating. When the night was finished, some would lie beside the mounds of grain in order to protect it from thieves. The owner himself, would typically stay there all night, in order to protect his investment.

Naomi, knowing the custom that Boaz would be sleeping at the threshing floor to secure the harvest, instructs Ruth to go to the threshing floor and keep her presence hidden. Other female servants who had worked the harvest may have been there, but remember, Ruth was not a servant. She really had no right to be there. Naomi wanted to seize this opportunity, while the heart of Boaz was rejoicing because of the end of harvest.

Naomi instructed Ruth to wash, perfume, and dress herself, and go to the celebration keeping herself hid from Boaz until he slept. Then she was to go uncover his feet and lay there. Naomi's final instructions were to do whatever Boaz asked her to do.

Ruth 3:5:

And she **said** [*amar*]^{2nd} unto her, All that thou **sayest** [*amar*]^{3rd} unto me I will do.

Ruth agreed to do all that Naomi told her. That's obedience out of love.

Ruth makes her request: Ruth proceeds according to the plan and does as Naomi has instructed.

Ruth 3:6,7:

And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law

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bade her.

And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet,⁶⁸ and laid her down. [Whatever it means “to uncover the feet,” it happened while Boaz slept.]

Some teach that what Ruth did was immoral and that she was offering herself to Boaz sexually. Why did she have to watch and remember the place where he laid down? Because there were other people there that night too, and she had to make sure she laid at the feet of the right one. Had Boaz not been a man of such great integrity perhaps he would have taken advantage of the situation. However, the covering of oneself with the skirt or mantle was a ceremonial act that was completely proper.

Ruth 3:8,9:

And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid [startled], and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

And he **said** [*amar*]^{4th} Who *art* thou? And she **answered** [*amar*]^{5th}, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman.

Ruth completely followed Naomi’s direction, and when Boaz awoke startled, he asked who it was that was at his feet. Ruth responded humbly and asked him to perform the responsibility of a kinsman-redeemer. Ruth’s coming to him at night under the cover of darkness was so that no one knew of her petition of Boaz. This way, if Boaz was not interested in performing the duty of the kinsman-redeemer, he could decline without the whole town knowing about it.

Ruth requested that Boaz spread his skirt over her. People frequently misunderstand Ruth’s actions thinking that she is propositioning him. However, that is not the case, Boaz understood what she was doing. She was asking for his protection and covering in marriage. The Hebrew words translated “to spread your covering over your maid” are an idiom referring to marrying.⁶⁹

What is often missed is Ruth’s allusion to Boaz’s blessing of 2:12. “Skirt” is the Hebrew, *kanaph*, which is translated “wing” in 2:12.⁷⁰ Ruth was reminding him of his gracious words of blessing, “The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.” He was right; she had come to trust in Jehovah and His righteous law. Now, she calls his attention to the responsibility of the next of kin and requests that he do the part of the kinsman-redeemer according to that law which they both revered. The Lord’s provision not only

⁶⁸ Although “feet” may be used euphemistically for the sex organs when used in the phrase “uncover the feet,” it is hardly likely that this is what it means here. Since the threshing floor was a public place and there were others present, to suggest that Boaz and Ruth had sexual intercourse is adding something to the text which is not stated.

⁶⁹ *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, Botterweck, G. J. & Ringren, H., Eerdmans, Grand Rapids, MI, Volume VII, page 231.

⁷⁰ It is also the same word used of God “spreading His skirt” over Israel in a covenant of marriage protection. See Ezekiel 16:8.

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provided for gleaning, but for redemption for her by a kinsman-redeemer. Ruth has done her part in making the request, but how would Boaz respond?

We'll see that in just a minute. But, first I want to look at why she chose to sleep at his feet and cover herself with the fringe of his garment.

The reason for choosing to sleep at his feet was to cover herself with the extremity of the garment which would be where the hem was. The hem of the garment was very significant in the East.⁷¹ It was where things were sown to identify the authority of the family. Perhaps it's a bit similar to the Scottish kilts which identified the clan. However, it was also where insignias of authority were worn. In our culture we do it on the sleeve. Military men and police wear their rank on their sleeves. When I was in high school the custom was for athletes who lettered in a varsity sport to wear letter sweaters. We added stripes on the sleeve for each year we lettered and for all-conference, all-county, and all-state honors.

Boaz responds to Ruth's appeal for protection: Boaz was not embarrassed or offended by her request. He recognized that she acted within her rights according to the law and the custom of the law.

Ruth 3:10:

And he **said** [*amar*],^{6th} Blessed *be* thou of the LORD, my daughter (a reminder of their age difference): *for* thou hast shewed more **kindness** [*chesed*] (third occurrence 1:8; 2:20) in the latter end (right now by doing this) than at the beginning (when I meet you in the field and spoke the blessing you just alluded to), inasmuch as thou followedst [*yalak, go/went after*]⁷² not young men (he had thought that she perhaps could have done better in getting a younger man), whether poor or rich.

Every action Ruth took was guided by the Word. She didn't go after young men, she went after God through His Word. Remember James 4:2? "Ye have not because ye ask not." Ruth asked for Boaz to do the part of the kinsman redeemer according the law of Moses, the Word of God. What would Boaz's response be?

Ruth 3:11,12:

And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou **requirest** [*amar*]^{7th} for all the city of my people doth know that thou *art* a virtuous woman. (There is no indication that he took advantage of the situation. Would she still be a virtuous woman had he done as some suggested that he did?)

⁷¹ In the East the hem is very significant. See David's removal of Saul's hem (I Samuel 24), the fringes on Levitical garments (Numbers 15:38,39; Deuteronomy 22:12; Exodus 28:33,34; 39:25,26), the Lord's hem sought for healing (Matthew 14:36; Mark 6:56; Luke 8:44), etc.

⁷² The phrase "go after" is interesting to work. Ruth controlled herself and didn't go after younger men. Joshua told the people when they were about go enter the Promised Land to move when the Ark of the covenant moved (Joshua 3:1-3). The Ark represented the Word of God that was carried therein. It's the Word of God we should go after. Our hearts and desires will be best fulfilled when they are set upon God and the things of God. See also Deuteronomy. 6:14; 11:28; 13:2; 28:14; I Samuel 12:21, II Samuel 20:11, I Kings 11:10; Hosea 2:5; Luke 15:4.

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And now it is true that I *am thy* near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

Instead of taking advantage of the situation as some may have done, he recognizes her loyalty to Naomi and her kindness to act to care for her elder mother-in-law. Not only was she willing to work heartily in the fields gleaning, she was willing to marry an older man, Boaz, in order to redeem Naomi's land and provide for her mother-in-law. Ruth's action to fulfill her responsibility to her first husband Mahlon and keep the family name of Elimelech alive was very honorable in the eyes of Boaz.

Boaz described her action as a kindness. Boaz had no right to approach Ruth with the idea of redeeming Elimelech's land. The law stated that the only way for the land to be redeemed was for Ruth, the wife of the dead man, to ask him to do so. If Boaz had been the nearest kinsman who was responsible to do so and he forfeited the claim and refused her, the law required that they both go to the gate and in front of witnesses, Ruth would slap his face, spit on him and he would then be required to take off his shoe, as a symbol of shame, and to give it to the woman and he would have to walk around for one week wearing only one shoe. Ruth wanted to save Boaz this embarrassment and shame should he want to decline. The sandal would become the title deed for redeeming the land and the marriage license for redeeming the widow of the dead.

However, Boaz receives her proposal with gladness, and it is obvious that he had been thinking about Ruth's situation because he was aware of someone else who had a closer claim than he. What a twist in the plot. Everything had been going so well; we could see the love story develop so beautifully. However, at the very point she makes the request, she learns of a problem.⁷³ Boaz pledges to follow through and commits to bring the matter to a resolve the next day.

Ruth 3:13a:

Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as* the LORD liveth:⁷⁴

Put a period there. As surely as the Lord was a living God, Boaz vowed to do the part of the kinsman-redeemer if he was afforded the opportunity. For Boaz not to follow through on his commitment after invoking the Lord's name would have been a transgression of the third commandment (Exodus 20:7).

Ruth 3:13b,14:

...lie down until the morning.

And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he **said** [*amar*],^{8th} Let it not be known that a woman came into the

⁷³ Every love story has to have problems to overcome.

⁷⁴ For other uses of this vow see: Judges 8:19; I Samuel 14:39,45; 19:6; 20:3,21; 25:26; 26:10,16; 28:10; 29:6; II Samuel 4:9; 12:5; 14:11; 15:21; I Kings 1:29; 2:24; 22:14; II Kings 2:2,4,6; 4:30; 5:16,20; II Chronicles 18:13; Jeremiah 38:16.

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floor.

Boaz continued to act responsibly. He did not send her home in the middle of the night, but rather he had her wait until early morning when it was safer. He did not and would not touch her until she could be rightfully his. He recognized and protected the right of her nearer kinsman to perform after the custom of the law. However, it was important to keep this secret so that no one would know that Boaz was interested in performing as a kinsman-redeemer. Although nothing improper had happened, the last thing they needed was gossip. But, before she left, Boaz sent a pledge to Naomi.

Ruth 3:15:

Also he **said** [*amar*],^{9th} Bring the vail *that thou* hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her: and she went into the city.

Boaz puts six measures of barley into her vail and helps her place it on top of her head. That's how women carried their burdens in those days. So, Ruth returns to her mother-in-law to report back on the developments and to deliver the barley. The barley was a pledge from Boaz to Naomi that she would be provided for in the future, and that her matchmaking efforts were appreciated.

Ruth 3:16,17:

And when she came to her mother in law, she **said** [*amar*],^{10th} Who *art* thou, my daughter?⁷⁵ And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she **said** [*amar*],^{11th} These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he **said** [*amar*]^{12th} to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. (Boaz wanted her to know how thankful he was for her efforts.)

Naomi knew Boaz was committed and would not rest until the matter was resolved. Boaz was a man of honor and would fulfill his promise. Naomi and Ruth had done all that they could. They would rest and wait patiently for the Lord.

Ruth 3:18:

Then **said** [*amar*]^{13th} she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

Naomi interprets for us here what the six measures meant. She understood it as a sign, a pledge, indicating a commitment on Boaz's part to resolve the situation. Boaz had given his word to Ruth and now sent the grain as a pledge to Naomi. Why six measures? What did God do after the six days of creation? He rested from all His work. Naomi understood the measures to signify rest. It was a token to the women to rest in Boaz's pledge to redeem them. They should rest for Boaz acting in their place would not rest until it would be resolved that day.

⁷⁵ In the Hebrew the question asks for information about the condition of the person, rather than just their identity. Obviously she knows who she is; she wants to know, "How did it go?"

Chapter Four – Love’s Reward Rejoicing in Redemption⁷⁶

In chapter four we find one of the clearest illustrations of the kinsman-redeemer in all the Old Testament. The Hebrew word, *goel*, clusters in Chapter 4, being used 15 times in two forms.

Love, duty, and honor motivated the kinsman-redeemer. There was no compulsion placed upon him. The act of redemption was left at the discretion of the redeemer. He had to be both willing and able to perform.

Remember Boaz has resolved to bring this to fulfillment this day. He had promised Ruth as much, and she and Naomi were waiting, resting in his promise. However, it seems as if he goes about his daily business just like any other day. We noted in 2:1, when Boaz was introduced, that he was a *gibbor*, a mighty man. We will see Boaz, as a mighty man, complete the redemption he had promised.

Ruth 4:1,2:

Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the **kinsman**⁷⁷ of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down.

And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

The gate of the city was the place that both personal business and civic affairs were conducted.⁷⁸ We know that Boaz was a wealthy landowner, but this shows us that he was also one of the elders at the gate. Otherwise he would have no authority to direct the action of the nearer kinsman and ten others to sit as witnesses of what he was about to do.

Ruth 4:3,4a:

And he said unto the **kinsman**,^{2nd} Naomi, that is **come again**^{14th} [*shub*] out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech’s: And I thought to advertise⁷⁹ [uncover or reveal to] thee, saying, Buy *it* before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt **redeem**^{3rd} *it*, **redeem**^{4th} *it*: but if thou wilt not **redeem**^{5th} *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know: for *there is none to redeem*^{6th} *it* beside thee; and I *am* after thee....

Boaz is bringing the matter to a conclusion, like he said he would. But before we continue with that, let’s take a moment to talk about the law of redemption concerning the land because it is strange when compared to our western culture. We think of transfer

⁷⁶ The underlying theme of chapter four is “faithfulness.”

⁷⁷ This is the ninth occurrence of *gaal* in Ruth. The Hebrew “*gaal*” is used thirteen times in chapter four, twelve of which occur in the first eight verses. It occurs 21 times in the entire book and is the main theme of Ruth.

⁷⁸ See Genesis 19:1; II Samuel 15:2-6; I Kings 22:10; Amos 5:10,12,15.

⁷⁹ “Advertise” is “*galah*,” “uncover.” It occurs two other places (3:4,7) both translated “uncover.” It occurs in Deuteronomy 29:29 translated “revealed.”

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of title in fee simple. When we pay for a piece of property it becomes ours as long as we want to keep it. It transfers to our heirs should we die.

However, in the East such was not the case.⁸⁰ God owned the land, and He had Joshua divide it up amongst the twelve tribes of Israel. (Now Levi did not get a portion, but Joseph got two portions, one for Ephraim and one for Manassah so it ended up being divided into twelve portions.) The concept was that the land was to stay within the tribe. That is one reason that genealogies are so important in the Bible. The land was an inheritance of the tribe and was passed down from generation to generation. If an Israelite got into trouble financially and had to sell his land he could do so, but it was more like what we would call a lease. What was really sold was the right to use the land, because on the year of Jubilee the land always returned to the original owners.

The law of redemption established a procedure where the next of kin could repurchase the land for his troubled family member and return it to him. Boaz had no right to redeem the property until the nearer kinsman refused, and neither he nor the other kinsman was under any obligation to do it; but having once assumed the redemption, the one thus exercising his right was by that act under obligation to marry the widow.

The *goel* had to be related, a kinsman. He had to be able to perform, and he had to be willing to perform. He would also be obliged to assume all the obligations of those he redeemed.

Ruth 4:4b:

And he said, I will **redeem**^{7th} *it*.

Oh no! That's not what is supposed to happen. We are rooting for Boaz and Ruth to get together. However, Boaz is not shook, he continues "as if reading the fine print" unto him.

Ruth 4:5:

Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy *#* also *o*f Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

Boaz continued to explain that it is more than just redeeming the land. The kinsman-redeemer was also duty-bound to take Ruth to wife and raise seed unto Mahlon and Elimelech. Apparently that was beyond what this other unnamed kinsman could do. He was willing to redeem the land, but not willing to marry Ruth. Since he couldn't do one without the other, he responded:

Ruth 4:6-8:

And the **kinsman**^{8th} said, I cannot **redeem**^{9th} *it* for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: **redeem**^{10th} thou my right to thyself; for I cannot **redeem**^{11th} *it*.
Now this *was the manner* in former time in Israel concerning redeeming⁸¹ and

⁸⁰ See Leviticus 25:23-28

⁸¹ This is another related word to *gaal*, *gullah*, another participle form.

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concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave *it* to his neighbour: and this *was* a testimony in Israel. [Remember we read that in Deuteronomy 25:9]

Therefore the **kinsman**^{12th} said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

The nearer kinsman deferred to Boaz and gave him the right to act as the kinsman-redeemer before the witnesses. Although the specific details are left out, we are left with the simple explanation of why he changed his mind in the phrase, “I cannot redeem it, lest I mar my own inheritance.” Although there is no textual support, some suggest that the fact that Ruth was a Moabitess was the reason for his change of mind. That would not have been the deterrent to Boaz that it might have been to others. Do you remember who Boaz’s mother was? Rahab. Both his mother and his wife appear in the genealogy of Jesus Christ. If it were just a matter of redeeming the land for Naomi, he would have done it, but it also meant taking Ruth to wife and raising up seed to her. Naomi was past child-bearing age, but Ruth was not. Offspring from the union with Ruth would inherit Elimelech’s land at the expense of the kinsman-redeemer’s other progeny who would have gotten that money had it not been used to redeem the land. According to Deuteronomy 25:6, the first child would take the inheritance of the dead, but remaining sons would receive from the inheritance of the kinsman redeemer further distributing it among more offspring.

The drawing off of the sandal denoted the forfeiture of the right. The custom of walking the land that belonged to you led to the custom of using the sandal as a symbol of possession in land transactions.⁸² Symbolically, the forfeiture of the sandal represented abdicating the promise. They wouldn’t go there. Therefore they would not receive those promises.

Like Orpah, the nearer kinsman walks off the pages of God’s Word never to be heard from again, while Boaz finds a prominent place in the genealogy of the Promised Seed.

Ruth 4:9,10:

And Boaz said *unto* the elders, and unto all the people, Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that *was* Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, of the hand of Naomi.

Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased⁸³ to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place [i.e. serving as an elder at the gate]: ye *are* witnesses this day.

Boaz pulls off his plan. By the end of the day he has acquired the right to be kinsman redeemer, and he is elated. Boaz has redeemed both Naomi and Ruth, and will provide for both of them from now on. Boaz declares that he will raise seed to the dead (Remember Ruth had been barren for 10 years when she was married to Mahlon.) who

⁸² Genesis 13:17; Deuteronomy 1:36; 11:24; Joshua 1:3; & 14:9 refer to the promise that wherever the sole of your foot shall tread upon shall be yours.

⁸³ Sounds similar to something God did for us in Christ. See Ephesians 1:14 and Acts 20:20.

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would come to the gate of the city to take part in judicial matters serving as an elder at the gate. Then he calls the people to witness. They witness and also speak a blessing.

Ruth 4:11:

And all the people that *were* in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:

Now that's quite a blessing. Rachel had been barren for many years before she conceived and between she and Leah twelve sons were born to Jacob which became the twelve tribes of Israel. Ruth had been similarly barren for ten years in Moab while married to Mahlon, but this blessing speaks of Ruth bearing those who would be famous in Bethlehem. Who is the most famous of all who have been born in the little town of Bethlehem? Right the kinsman-redeemer of all mankind, the Lord Jesus Christ.

However, they have not finished speaking. Let's read on in verse 12.

Ruth 4:12:

And let thy house be like the house of Pharez,⁸⁴ whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.

On the surface that sounds good, just like verse 11. Without knowing the record of Pharez and Tamar we do not really know what this is saying. Pharez was an illegitimate child born to Tamar because Judah had refused to have his son Shelah perform the levirate marriage to Tamar. Although on the surface Boaz may want to say, "The same to you, Buddy!" a closer investigation is very enlightening. Commentators' note three primary reasons for Pharez being mentioned. They are:

1. Because of the levirate connection to Tamar, who was also a foreigner who perpetuated a family line threatened with distinction.
2. Because Pharez's descendants had settled in Bethlehem, and had become Judah's leading house.
3. Because Pharez was an ancestor of Boaz.⁸⁵

Now what would the house of Pharez have in common with the house of Boaz? Why would Boaz think that having his house like the house of Pharez would be a blessing? Verses 11 and 12 are more than just a casual blessing. They are prophetic, foretelling the coming of the Promised Seed. Pharez was blessed because he carried on the Christ-line. Similarly Boaz would be blessed as the Christ-line proceeded through him and Ruth.

Judah refused to give Shelah his youngest son to Tamar to do as the law required according to the levirate marriage command. Therefore Pharez who was born to Tamar out of wedlock was a bastard child. Because of this, according to Deuteronomy 23:2,

⁸⁴ See Genesis 38:6-29; Deuteronomy 23:2. David is the tenth from Pharez.

⁸⁵ *The Bible Knowledge Commentary*, Walwood, John F. and Zuck, Roy B., Chariot Victor Publishing, CO page 427.

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there would be a curse on the line until the tenth generation. The prophecy had already been given that the Messiah would come through the tribe of Judah.⁸⁶

Since Genesis 49:10 declared that Judah was to be the royal tribe, why did Samuel seek a king from the tribe of Benjamin? The children of Israel were not really wrong to want a king; God had promised them one in Genesis 49:10. They were just in too big a hurry to have one. They wanted it now, instead of waiting for the tenth generation from Judah, which would be David. It was not until the tenth generation, David, that the curse was lifted. Remember God took the kingdom from Saul and gave it to David.

What was spoken here in Ruth 4:12 is prophetic of David (Remember it said, “shall give.”) and of David’s offspring who would be the Messiah. The last four verses of Ruth are the genealogical tie between Judah and David. The next one in the believer’s line after Judah to be prophesied to be the father of the Messiah was David. He was ten generations removed from Pharez. The curse due to the failure of Judah to perform the levirate marriage was completely reversed when Boaz graciously did perform the levirate marriage law. They spoke prophetically of the tenth from Pharez as the seed of this young woman.

The seed Boaz would raise through Ruth would be blessed indeed. Verses 13-17 then bring the narrative to a close as marriage, God-given conception, and the longed for heir are mentioned in a few short verses.

Ruth 4:13:

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD [As He had said or covenanted] gave her conception, and she bare a son.

Look at the wonderful hand of blessing of the Lord upon this couple. The redeeming work of the *goel* has been realized.

Ruth 4:14-17:

And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a **kinsman**^{13th}, that his name [Obed] may be famous in Israel. And he [Obed] shall be unto thee a **restorer**^{15th} [*shub*, again in the Hiphil, the cause of the return] of *thy* life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons,⁸⁷ hath born him. And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he *is* the father of Jesse [which means “I possess”], the father of David.

At the first meeting of the women and Naomi, Naomi did all the talking out of her grief, declaring that the Lord had dealt bitterly with her. Now the women do all the talking and are quick to point out just the opposite. The women who had witnessed Naomi in

⁸⁶ The Book of Ruth reveals God’s providence in providing a king for His people. (See also Genesis 17:6; II Samuel 7; I Chronicles 17; & Psalms 89.)

⁸⁷ Seven sons symbolized a great blessing on a Hebrew family; I Samuel 2:5; Job 1:2.

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desolation when she returned from Moab, now sing praises to the Lord Who has turned her captivity. She who had returned in great sorrow now radiates joy and elation. She who had returned empty has now been made full. There is an important point to be made here that BOTH Naomi and Ruth were redeemed by the kinsman redeemer. Life and vitality had been restored to both.

Remember the first son inherited Elimelech's land. That was Obed, he received Elimelech's portion in Bethlehem thereby providing a place for his offspring (which eventually included Jesus). The promise that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem had been intricately planned. However, it required the work of the kinsman-redeemer in Ruth and later a Roman taxation or registration to ultimately bring it to pass.

The last four verses list the genealogy from Pharez to David, and provide documentation of the lineage of the Promised Seed.

Ruth 4:18-21:

Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,
And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,
And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,
And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,
And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

Why is this important? First of all it links David to the tribe of Judah. Second, it shows David as the tenth generation from Pharez and no longer under the curse. Thirdly it shows God's providential care in providing for his people. The seemingly ordinary travels, marriages, deaths, harvesting, gleaning, eating, and land purchases are an intricately woven tapestry of the guiding activities of our sovereign God. He works in people, who trust Him and commit themselves to Him, to bring His Word and will to pass.

The book of Ruth wants to teach us that God's purpose for the life of His people is to connect us to something far greater than ourselves. God wants us to know that when we follow Him our lives always mean more than we think they do. For the Christian there is always a connection between the ordinary events of life and the stupendous work of God in history. Everything we do in obedience to God, no matter how small, is significant. It is part of a cosmic mosaic which God is painting to display the greatness of His power and wisdom to the world and to the principalities and powers in the heavenly places (Ephesians 3:10). The deep satisfaction of the Christian life is that it is not given over to trifles. Serving a widowed mother-in-law, gleaning in a field, falling in love, having a baby—for the Christian these things are all connected to eternity. They are part of something so much bigger than they seem.⁸⁸

In *Living In God's Power*, Part II, I used the analogy of the onion in talking about

⁸⁸ Piper, John, *Ruth: The Best Is Yet To Come*, available online at <http://www.soundofgrace.com/piper84/072284m.htm>

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working the Word. There are different levels in working and understanding the Word. We have just read the entire Book of Ruth doing our best to appreciate it in its historical context.

To the best of my ability, that is the proper interpretation of Ruth. It is a beautiful love story of the redemption of the kinsman-redeemer. The next level of understanding comes when we make applications to our lives. As sons of God today, whose inheritance is not in the Promised Land, but in the riches of God's grace and glory in Christ Jesus, how do we apply it?

I could make all kinds of applications for you; I could tell you what you "ought to do" in light of what you just heard. But, I'm not going to do that. I want you to do that; you must make your own applications. This facet or aspect of learning from Ruth will not come by hearing my voice on the tape, but rather from listening, recognizing, and responding to the Holy Spirit Who wants to work within you to will and to do of His good pleasure.

God has more for you, if you want to dig a little deeper. God has more for you as you ponder the paths your feet are taking. We just saw what God can do in the lives of people who are committed and faithful to Him.

I want to encourage and beseech you to make the proper applications of the message of the Book of Ruth to your life. Think about the major themes of each chapter and see what God would have you do.

In chapter one we saw *Love's Resolve: Returning to Bethlehem*. Naomi had tasted and seen that the Lord was good, and she wanted to enjoy God's provision for her. God had worked in her heart to make a life-changing decision by giving her His Word. She decided to return and then followed through until she actually arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest. Naomi did not decide for her daughters-in laws. She constrained them to return to Moab, and only Ruth loved her enough to refuse to do so. Ruth's resolve to love Naomi and commit herself to Naomi and the God of Israel is an example that has been immortalized in God's Word and will live forever as an example for all generations.

Where has God provided "Bread" for you? Where else will you find the "bread from heaven" apart from the Lord Jesus Christ. Many times tragedies and hardships in life constrain people to return to their "old man ways." It is the love of Christ that constrains us to move ahead with the things of God with resolve, compassion, and determination. Have you tasted and seen that the Lord is good? Are you enjoying the inheritance of what you have in Christ Jesus? Do you need to return to it? These are all applications you must make for yourselves.

In chapter two we saw *Love's Response: Gleaning in the fields of Boaz*. Following through on our decision requires that we respond and go to work. When we come to the field of Christ, the Word of God, to glean, our efforts, as Ruth's was, are met with gracious provision. The Lord of the harvest will do exceeding abundantly above all we

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could ask or think. The Lord has His eye on you and is leaving “handfuls on purpose” for you. He will personally provide for your hunger and thirst as he encourages you to go no where else to glean.

In chapter three we saw *Love’s Request: Asking for Rest*. Have you ever put yourself at Christ’s feet and asked for his protection? Is your eye on him? Do you mark where he is and follow in his footsteps? Are you enjoying God’s rest? Have you found the promise you need and made specific request for it? Are you resting in His promise to do all that you require or ask?

In chapter four we saw *Love’s Reward: Rejoicing in Redemption*. Have you seen your kinsman-redeemer act in your stead? Have you seen what he did outside the city gates to purchase you? Are you enjoying the new life you have been given? He paid an awesome price, and we should make sure we rejoice in what he accomplished for us.

The last level is the Prophetic, Symbolic, or Typological where these historical accounts are a shadow of things to come and point to our Lord Jesus Christ. That’s what the next hour is all about.

None of us really see all of the big picture of what God is working in our lives. We learned in Ruth that God does great things in the lives of ordinary people who are faithful to Him. The choices we make; the journeys we take; the pasts we forsake all occur under the mighty hand of God. He is ever watching and ever working to lead us in the way that we should go. Just as surely as His hand was on Naomi and Ruth, and He had them redeemed. He has also worked in our lives to redeem us. Our *goel*, the Lord Jesus Christ purchased us. We are bought with a price. We belong to him, and he belongs to us.

Prophetic Symbolism

I want to look at another aspect of the Book of Ruth: its prophetic symbolism. There is a story behind the story that is absolutely magnificent. You may have heard that the Old Testament is the New Testament concealed, and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. I want to take a moment and look at how the Old Testament Book of Ruth conceals the true and faithful kinsman-redeemer that was promised to us, the Lord Jesus Christ. We should also see how the New Testament reveals the great truths of the Book of Ruth. Let's see how we can see some of the inter-relation of the Old and New Testaments.

Hosea 12:10:

I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.

A similitude shows how one thing is like another. Parables, analogies, and types are all examples of similitudes. In our culture we use the term "model." A model is a representation of something for our insight or instruction. There are simple two-dimensional models. There are three-dimensional models. When you get fancy, there are also complex computer generated simulations.

Remember how Peter talked about how the Old Testament Prophets knew of the great salvation that laid ahead for God's people, but couldn't figure it out because it was part of the mystery, which had been hid from ages and generations.

I Peter 1:10-13:

Of which salvation the prophets have enquired and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

Searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things, which are now reported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

Ruth was part of the kethubim, the other writings, not part of the law and prophets. It was read yearly at Pentecost, and most scholars suggest that was because of the association with the harvests in the Book of Ruth. However, I would like to suggest that it was because the Book of Ruth was prophetic of the salvation that God would make available on the day of Pentecost of which the Book of Ruth is prophetic.

Although Ruth relates a historical story of the redemption of Naomi and Ruth by Boaz, (An account which is totally, historically, accurate and true.) it also prophetically foretells of the redemption of the Jews and Gentiles by our kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus

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Christ. It does so by the use of symbolism or what some people may call types.

Types are figures or examples of something future, and are prophetic in nature. The value of identifying types is not to point out intricacies of doctrine, but to help us understand God's sovereignty and His work throughout history. When God had the Book of Ruth written, He was not only thinking of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz, He was thinking about Jesus Christ, our kinsman-redeemer. It was not only a wonderful story about God's deliverance of Naomi and Ruth by Boaz, their kinsman-redeemer. God wanted to show us how a kinsman-redeemer acted because Jesus Christ would ultimately do the same for us. The presence of types is an indication that God (Who knows the beginning from the end) is at work in history and that He inspired the Old Testament writers to record these typological events.

They may be used to illustrate truths of doctrine only after those truths are clearly revealed elsewhere. They are illustrations in as much as they agree with the clear revelation that follows. Understanding types helps us grasp and appreciate what God accomplished for us in Christ.

A type may be:

- (1) a person (Adam in Romans 5:14);
- (2) an event (The deliverance from Egypt in I Corinthians 10:1-11);
- (3) a thing (The veil of the temple in Hebrews 10:19-20);
- (4) an institution (The High Priesthood in Hebrews 9:11-12); or,
- (5) a ceremony (The Passover in I Corinthians 5:7).

Types occur most frequently in the Pentateuch, but are found, more sparingly, elsewhere. The antitype, or fulfillment of the type, is found generally in the New Testament. Scofield says two warnings are necessary: (1) nothing may be insisted upon as a type without explicit New Testament authority; and (2) all types not so authenticated must be recognized as having only the authority of analogy, of spiritual congruity.⁸⁹

The phrase "shadow of things to come" (Colossians 2:17 and Hebrews 8:5; 10:1) also shows the function of these types. They foreshadow the truth they are designed to illustrate.

For example sacrifices under the Mosaic law were but a shadow of the greater sacrifice to come. Today after seeing what Jesus Christ accomplished by his sacrificial death on the cross we understand how the Old Testament laws served as a shadow of things to come. If you stand in the shadow of a thing and look at the thing, you cannot see the details of it with distinction, because there is no light to illuminate it. But if you move to the other side of the thing and view the lighted side which casts the shadow, the details are illuminated and highlighted. The Old Testament laws concerning sacrifice are like that. What was unclear in the Old Testament as they stood in the shadow of the cross became clear for us as we view the cross with the light of the gospel of God's grace shining in its full brilliance upon it. In the shadow of the cross, their understanding was very limited. Now, we see it more clearly.

⁸⁹ Bible note on Genesis 2:23 in the Scofield Study Bible.

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Romans 10:4 says, “Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.” That not only means that the law ceased to function as it did before. It ended when all was fulfilled and the gift of holy spirit was given on Pentecost. It also means that Christ was the end, the goal, the final target toward which the law was aiming. The law pointed to Christ who would ultimately fulfill it.

Major events in the Old Testament were memorialized and communicated in feasts that foreshadowed what was to come in the future. The Passover lamb pointed to Christ who as our Passover was sacrificed for us.⁹⁰ The scapegoat pointed toward Christ who took upon himself the sins of the world.⁹¹

The law points to Christ as:

The brazen serpent upheld in the wilderness (Numbers 21:9; John 3:14)
The manna from heaven (Exodus 16:15; John 6:51)
The sacrifice of the firstfruits (Exodus 34:22,26; I Corinthians 15:20,23)
The lion of Judah (Genesis 49:9; Revelation 10:5)
The star to rise out of Jacob (Numbers 24:17)
The scepter that shall rise out of Israel (Numbers 24:17)
Our city of refuge (Numbers 35)
Our daysman (Job 9:33)
Our ensign (Isaiah 11:10)
Our foundation (Isaiah 28:16; I Corinthians 3:11)
Our friend that sticks closer than a brother (Proverbs 18:24)
Our stronghold (Nahum 1:7)
Our kinsman-redeemer (Isaiah 59:20)

Isaiah 59:20:

And the Redeemer shall come to Zion, and unto them that turn from transgression in Jacob, saith the LORD.

Ruth paints a wonderful word picture of our kinsman-redeemer Jesus Christ as we saw in the first three sessions.

Romans 5:14:

Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is the figure [Greek *tupos*, type⁹²] of him that was to come.

Adam, the man, the historical person, who lived in the Old Testament was a type of the coming Christ. Adam’s father was God and so was Christ’s. There are also many more ways in which Adam was a type of Christ. Jesus is called the last Adam in I Corinthians

⁹⁰ Exodus 12:11; I Corinthians 5:7

⁹¹ Leviticus 16:26; Hebrews 9:15

⁹² The figure of speech, “type” is distinct and different from the Greek, *tupos*, meaning “type.” This is the only use of *tupos* that fits the figure of speech type. For further explanation see Bullinger, E.W. *Figures of Speech in the Bible*, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, MI, 1968, page 768.

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15:45. Aaron, David, Eliakim, Joseph, Melchizedek, and others were also types of Christ.

Boaz: Boaz, the kinsman redeemer in Ruth, is a type of our true and faithful kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

I Peter 1: 18-20:

Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not **redeemed** with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot:

Who verily was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you,

Boaz paid the price of the redemption of Naomi and Ruth outside the gate of the city. Hundreds of years later our kinsman-redeemer would pay the price for us. The price he paid could not be counted in dollars and cents. It was far greater. He paid the price of his blood. He qualified as the perfect sacrifice and was therefore “able to perform.”

Ephesians 1:7:

In whom [Jesus Christ] we have **redemption** through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace

Just like Boaz Jesus was willing to perform. He did not have to give his life. He laid it down freely.⁹³ What kept him on the cross was his great love, that’s the riches of his grace and kindness toward us.

Colossians 1:14:

In whom we have **redemption** through his blood, *even* the forgiveness of sins:

As with the kinsman-redeemer of the Old Testament, Jesus fulfilled all the qualifications of the *goel*. First, the *goel* had to be a kinsman, and Jesus was a man. Second he had to be able to perform, as God’s only begotten son with perfect, unpolluted blood, he had the wherewithal that was necessary. He was able to perform our redemption. Third, he had to be willing to perform, and of Jesus it was written in Psalms 40:7-8 and Hebrews 10:9, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God.” Lastly, he would be obliged to assume all the obligations of those he redeemed.

Just as Boaz assumed all that was contrary to Naomi and Ruth, Jesus Christ assumed all the responsibility of our sin and made full restitution. Isaiah tells us how it happened.

Isaiah 53:4-6:

Surely he [Jesus, the Messiah] hath borne our griefs [sicknesses], and carried our sorrows [pains]: yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the

⁹³ See John 10:14-18.

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chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.
All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way;
and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all.

God laid it on Jesus Christ. He paid the price. Jesus Christ bore our sicknesses and pain. He took our sin and everything else that was against us. He Redeemed our weaknesses. He redeemed our mistakes.

Colossians 2:14:

Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;



This refers to the paying off the debts of another, which was another thing the kinsman-redeemer would do. The same truth is disclosed in Isaiah.

Isaiah 40:1,2:

Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God.

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Speak ye comfortably to Jerusalem, and cry unto her, that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned: for she hath received of the LORD'S hand double for all her sins.

“Double” in Isaiah 40:2, does not mean twice as much. Where would the comfort be in that? If one had exceeding great debt a list of indebtedness was written out and posted on the gate. Everyone would see it and not do business with the person. They would extend no more credit to him until his debts were fully paid for. Often a benefactor would see the notice and want to remove the shame and disgrace associated with it. The benefactor would graciously make full restitution,⁹⁴ and then the elders at the gate would take the list and fold it in half, doubling it. Those things that were against the man have been fully paid for.

Bishop Pillai translated Isaiah 40:2 as:

Speak comfort to the heart of Jerusalem, and declare unto her, that the appointed time is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned; for she hath received of the Lord's hand a fully paid up receipt for all her sins.⁹⁵

Jesus assumed the responsibility for our sin and became sin for us, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.⁹⁶ All the sin and iniquity that was against us were eradicated. Jesus Christ paid our debts of sin in full. He paid in full for our release from the bondage of the law. He was subjected to pain, sickness, suffering, and death for us. By taking these things upon himself, he "blotted out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us... nailing it to his cross."

The kinsman-redeemer had three major responsibilities in the Old Testament.

1. To redeem land that was forfeited and return it to the original owner. (Leviticus 25:23-28)
2. To redeem a kinsman from bondage to a foreigner. (Leviticus 25:47-49)
3. To avenge the death of a slain kinsman as a point of honor. (Numbers 37:12,19,21; Deuteronomy 19:6,12)

The same word translated kinsman redeemer is translated avenger of blood depending on the context. If somebody killed my brother it was my responsibility as the avenger of blood to avenge his death. That's how justice was executed back then. If my brother was murdered I, as an avenger of blood, would have the right to go find that person and execute him. Execute the judgment: eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth, life for a life. This is part of Jesus Christ's responsibility as our kinsman redeemer.

The Book of Ruth foretells of the kinsman-redeemer's accomplishment of the first two of these responsibilities on the Day of Pentecost at the beginning of this administration of

⁹⁴ A partial payment of debts by the benefactor was unacceptable.

⁹⁵ *Old and New Testament Orientalisms Teachings of Bishop K.C. Pillai*, American Christian Press, New Knoxville, OH 1980, page 210.

⁹⁶ II Corinthians 5:21

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the mystery. He redeemed our inheritance. Our inheritance is no longer over seas. It's not in the Middle East. It doesn't have boundaries of lakes and lands. Our inheritance is what we have in Christ Jesus. Our inheritance is the holy spirit that we have⁹⁷... the ability to operate manifestations and walk with God. That's our inheritance. That's our right. Everything this Word of God says, this is our inheritance. Our inheritance isn't in land it's in the Word that we are more than conquerors; that we can do all things through Christ; that we can do whatever this Word says. He redeemed our inheritance this is our right.

The second responsibility was to redeem a kinsman from bondage to a foreigner. We used to belong to the adversary. We used to only be body and soul people, but He delivered us from the power of darkness and translated us into the kingdom of His dear son.⁹⁸ We no longer belong to the adversary. He's bought us back. He doesn't have any right over us. He's not our master anymore! We are new people. We are a new creation. He's brought us back. He's taken us to God's kingdom with him. Both of those were accomplished on the day of Pentecost for us. We have an inheritance. We no longer belong to the adversary.

However, the third responsibility, as an avenger of blood is yet to be fulfilled. Just as surely as he accomplished the first two, he will accomplish the third. Remember the opening of the public ministry of Jesus Christ in Luke 4?

Luke 4:16-20:

And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up: and, as his custom was, he went into the synagogue on the sabbath day, and stood up for to read.

And there was delivered unto him the book of the prophet Esaias. And when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written,

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised,

To preach the acceptable year of the Lord. **[Note the period!]**

And he closed the book, and he gave *it* again to the minister, and sat down. And the eyes of all them that were in the synagogue were fastened on him.

Jesus read from the scroll of Isaiah that day. He was reading the pericope for that Sabbath. This was not by accident either. This was divine design, as we will see as we read from Isaiah ourselves.

Isaiah 61:1,2:

The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to *them that are bound*;

To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD [This is where Jesus stopped.], and

⁹⁷ Ephesians 1:13,14

⁹⁸ Colossians 1:12-14

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the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn;

The reason Jesus did not finish reading the rest of the verse was so that He could say, “This day is this scripture fulfilled in your ears.” Jesus Christ has a warrior role, as the avenger of blood. The day of vengeance of our God has not yet come, but it is coming. Our *goel* will complete our redemption when the author of death is destroyed in the lake of fire. We have the earnest now that guarantees the full redemption when the last enemy, death, is destroyed.

Isaiah 61:3 continues:

Isaiah 61:3:

To appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the LORD, that he might be glorified.

Naomi certainly was comforted and received of the Lord, “beauty for ashes.” What a beautiful phrase for the restoration of life Naomi received and which we also receive being brought from death unto life.⁹⁹

Ephesians 1:13,14:

In whom ye also *trusted*, after that ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise,
Which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.

I Corinthians 15:26:

The last enemy *that* shall be destroyed *is* **death**.

The book of Job is thought by many to be the first book of the Bible to be written. In it, Job laments that he had no “physical” kinsman-redeemer¹⁰⁰ and prophecies of the redemption he knew was coming. Job walked in the light of what God had revealed to him and anticipated the redeemer centuries before he came. He knew that his redeemer lived and anticipated the hope of his bodily resurrection.

Job 19:25,26:

For I know *that* my redeemer liveth, and *that* he shall stand at the latter *day* upon the earth:
And *though* after my skin *worms* destroy this *body*, yet in my flesh shall I see God:

Job knew that there was going to be a resurrection of the just, and he was going to be in

⁹⁹ I John 3:14

¹⁰⁰ Although Job had no kinsman to act as his kinsman-redeemer, he looked forward to him who would redeem him. (Job 19:14,25,26)

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it. God redeemed Job and gave him double of what he had before. From the very first book of the Bible written, God has declared His story of redemption, the greatest thing He has ever done.

Naomi and Ruth: Naomi was a daughter of Israel and is a type of Jew or Judean. Ruth was a Moabitess and is a type of the Gentiles. Boaz redeemed both Naomi and Ruth. The new birth and sonship by seed are available to Jew and Gentile alike because of the completed work of Jesus.

When it came to the performance of the kinsman-redeemer, it is important to note that he did nothing until he was requested to do so. Although Boaz's love and admiration for Ruth was great he wasn't allowed to act on her behalf until he received her request. Once he did receive the request, he acted in her stead. Remember what we read in Deuteronomy 25:9? She was responsible to go to the elders at the gate and confront the nearest kinsman before the elders of the gate, but Boaz took her place. The only thing standing in the way of his redeeming her was the nearer kinsman. He confronted the nearer kinsman and performed that which he was not able to do. He did not rest until the redemption was complete.

Similarly it is the responsibility of the Jew and gentile to request the redemption. God has provided it through the accomplished work of Jesus Christ, and it is appropriated by confessing with the mouth that Jesus is lord and believing in the heart that God has raised him from the dead.

Both Naomi and Ruth were redeemed by Boaz. Remember when Obed was born he was called the child of both Ruth (4:13) and Naomi (4:17). He was called a restorer of life. Obed was a type of the new man taken from both Jew and Gentile.

Ephesians 2:13-18:

But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.

For he is our peace, who hath made both one [both Jew and Gentile], and hath broken down the middle wall of partition *between us*;

Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, *even* the law of commandments *contained* in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain [Jew and Gentile] one new man, *so* making peace;

And that he might reconcile both [Jew and Gentile] unto God in one body by the cross, having slain the enmity thereby:

And came and preached peace to you which were afar off [Gentile background], and to them that were nigh [Jewish background].

For through him we both [Jew and Gentile] have access by one Spirit unto the Father.

Isn't that beautiful? The mystery was hidden. Who'd of thought.

The nearer kinsman: Who was the other major character in the story? The nearer kinsman, who was apparently willing to perform, but unable to perform. He is a type of

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the law.

Galatians 4:4,5:

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,
To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Romans 8:3:

For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

The law was perfect, and therefore, imperfect man could not keep it.

Galatians 3:21:

Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law.

God would not have had His son die had it not been necessary. But neither the kinsman-redeemer nor the law could accomplish the redemption.

Galatians 2:21;

I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness *come* by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. [The law and the nearer kinsman was willing, but not able.]

If the nearer kinsman would have redeemed Ruth and Naomi, then Boaz would not have needed to. Boaz did it because he was able and willing and the nearer kinsman gave him the right. What gave Jesus Christ the right to redeem you and I when no one else could ever do it? Jesus' perfect fulfillment of the law gave him the right to act as the *goel*.

Acts 13:39:

And by him [Jesus Christ] all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses.

What the nearer kinsman could not perform, Boaz could. Similarly what the law could not do, the Lord Jesus Christ could. When Boaz took Ruth's and Naomi's place before the elders of the gate the only thing standing in the way of his redeeming her was the nearer kinsman. He confronted the kinsman and performed that which he was not able to do. He did not rest until the redemption was complete. Similarly the law stood in the way of our redemption. Jesus Christ confronted it and fulfilled every jot and tittle of it. All the sacrifices of the law looked forward to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The shedding of blood under the law was symbolic of what Jesus Christ would do.

The law is holy and just and good.¹⁰¹ Therefore it concluded that all have sinned and

¹⁰¹ Romans 7:12

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fallen short of the glory of God.¹⁰² The guilty are judged by it, and the guilty can by no means be cleared by it. Ruth acted upon the law, but realized the grace she received went far beyond it. She believingly appropriated the law of gleaning, the law of levirate marriage, and the redemption of the kinsman redeemer. However, she recognized that the treatment she received went way beyond what the law provided. Her initial response to Boaz's extremely gracious jesters was to fall on her face and bow herself to the ground and ask, "Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?"

The law could provide for the redemption of the land but not of the soul.

Psalms 46:6-9:

They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches;

None of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him:

(For the redemption of their soul *is* precious, and it ceaseth for ever:)

That he should still live for ever, *and* not see corruption.

It was only the precious blood of Jesus Christ that ransomed us and provided eternal life.

Hebrews 9:15:

And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions *that were* under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance.

What the law could not do, Jesus Christ graciously did for us.

The law says "Do or don't!" But, the grace provided by Jesus Christ says, "It is done."

The law commands, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ invites. (Romans 10:9-13)

The law condemns the best of men, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ redeems the worst of men. (Romans 3:19; Hebrews 11:25)

The law shuts every mouth before God, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ opens the mouth to praise God. (Romans 3:19; Acts 2:4; 10:46)

The law says the wages of sin is death, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ says the gift of God is eternal life. (Romans 6:23)

The law says the soul that sinneth shall die, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ says believe and live. (Ezekiel 18:4,20; John 11:25,26)

The law provides the knowledge of sin, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ provides the redemption from sin. (Romans 3:20; Ephesians 1:7)

The law works wrath, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ works peace. (Romans 4:15; 5:1,2)

The law reigns unto death, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ reigns unto eternal life. (Romans 5:21)

¹⁰² Romans 3:23

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The law demands obedience, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ bestows the power to obey. (Romans 1:5)

The law was done away in Christ, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ abides forever. (Romans 10:4)

The law brings us into the captivity of sin, the grace provided by Jesus Christ sets us in the liberty of the sons of God. (Romans 7:23; Galatians 5:1)

The law is weak through the flesh, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ is mighty through the spirit. (Romans 8:3; 15:19)

The law brings condemnation, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ brings salvation. (Titus 2:11)

The law makes nothing perfect, but the grace provided by Jesus Christ perfects that which is nought. (Hebrews 7:19; I Corinthians 1:28)

Conclusion

Ruth has stood throughout the ages as an example of a virtuous woman. Her love and commitment to Naomi and the God she taught her illustrates familial love at its best. The book of Ruth starts in tragedy and ends in Jubilee. The destitute return to their inheritance and through the provision of the Lord and the action of the kinsman-redeemer, they are redeemed and given a noble future.

The Book of Ruth is more than just a love story of Ruth and Naomi and Ruth and Boaz. It is ultimately an illustration of the love of a kinsman-redeemer for those he redeems. It was written with ink on scrolls, but the greatest love story of all time was written hundreds of years later in blood on a wooden cross. It beautifully illustrates the providence and guidance of the Lord for His people. There is always hope for God's people.

Ruth exemplifies so many Eastern customs, and allows the Law to be seen as an active delivering force in the lives of God's people. The importance of returning, the idea of grace and lovingkindness, and the truth of redemption are woven into a beautiful story prophetic of our Lord Jesus Christ. He was able to do that which the law could not do. He was able to redeem and deliver to the uttermost those who come to him.

The world's cry is, "Know thyself!" Well. Orpah knew herself; she knew that she would be more blessed with a husband living among her own people. The nearer-kinsman knew himself; he knew he didn't want to mar his inheritance. They knew themselves and what they wanted out of life... They were also limited by their desires.

The heart cry of Paul, on the other hand is, "That I might know him and the power of his resurrection!" When that is the longing of our heart that presses for fulfillment, we will make our return trip to Bethlehem. We will glean in the fields of our kinsman redeemer. We will ask him for rest and protection. We, too, will rejoice in the redemption he has provided for each of us.

You know Jesus Christ is our kinsman-redeemer. From our study of Ruth we know him a little better than we did before. Our love and appreciation for him brings us closer to the heart of God day by day. After all, when we see him; we have seen the Father.

Our resolve to commit ourselves to him... Our response to glean in His harvest... Our request for his rest and protection... will all allow us to enjoy the reward of being able to rejoice in our redemption as we know him and the power of his resurrection.

Jesus Christ is the red-thread that holds God's Word together. He makes known the heart of our invisible God. From Genesis 3:15 to Revelation 22:21 he declares God and His magnificence. Let's not settle for knowing ourselves. Let's set our hearts on knowing him.

Job said that he knew that his redeemer liveth and that he would stand one day in his resurrected body. So will you and I. How's the romance in your redemption? Have you

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resolved, responded, requested and been rewarded by your kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ?