



*The Book of Ruth A Story of  
Tragedy and Redemption*

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# *Introduction*

A. Background: Elimelech and his sons.

A sojourn in Moab.

Now it happened, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.”

- The people in the country of Moab were called the Moabites who were a heathen nation who worshipped the god Chemosh, which meant destroyer. Who were the Moabites? They had been Israel’s fiercest enemy, yet these countries were related.
- The Moabite race were descendants from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his eldest daughter; Lot was the nephew of Abraham the father of the Jewish nation. A son was born from that union and his name was Moab. This is the same race that tried to curse Israel as they were headed towards the Promise land. The king at that time was Balak who tried to enlist the help of a prophet named Balaam to curse them, but Balaam initially refused. However, Balak could not take no for an answer and told Balaam he would pay any price if he would just curse this great multitude who were coming towards his land. God had told Balaam not to curse these Jews for they were His chosen people. After receiving another plea from Balak, Balaam went to God again in prayer and made another request in cursing the nation of Israel and God told him to go with the men of Moab. Now, why did God do that? Because He was fed up with Balaam after He had told him no and was planning to kill him; more on that in a moment. Previously, God had told the nation of Israel not to marry or have any social relationship with any of the heathen nations because He knew that they would be inclined to worship their pagan gods and eventually (to a certain extent), that’s what they eventually did to their detriment.

- God became angry with Balaam and sent the Captain of the Lord's host to slay him (go to Numbers 22:21-35). Eventually Balaam would die in a war between Israel and the Midianites (Numbers 31:8). Now that we have the history of the Moabites let's find out how God would use a Moabitess to be linked genealogically to Jesus Christ and how trusting and believing in God Almighty transcends the thoughts of the world in regards to who God is and how He operates. This study of Ruth will be from an exegetical perspective, which is to gain the meaning of each scriptural event.

# Ruth Chapter 1

1. (Ruth1:1)

**“In the days when the judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and a man from Bethlehem in Judah, together with his wife and two sons, went to live for a while in the country of Moab.”**

- **In the days when the Judges ruled:** This account begins in the closing days of the book of Judges, a 400-year period of general anarchy and oppression when the Israelites were not ruled by kings, but by periodic deliverers whom God raised up when the nation sought Him again after failing out of favor with God.
  1. Notable among the Judges were Gideon, Samson, and Deborah. Each of these was raised up by God, not to rule as kings, but to lead Israel during a specific challenge, and then they would go back to obscurity because of their disobedience.
  2. The **days when the Judges ruled** were actually dark days for Israel; the period was characterized by the phrase *everyone did what was right in his own eyes* (Judges 17:6; Jdg 18:1; Jdg 19:1, and Judges 21:25).
- **A certain man of Bethlehem:** In these days, a man from **Bethlehem** left the land of Israel to **sojourn in the country of Moab**, because of famine. Bethlehem was a rich agricultural area (the city name means “House of Bread”), but times were tough, so he went to the pagan land of Moab. I think times were tough specifically for this family if not so, why didn’t many of the other town’s people leave?
  1. In trekking to Moab, he had to hike through the desolate Jericho pass, through the Judean wilderness near the Dead Sea, going across the Jordan River, into the land of Moab. This was a definite departure from the Promised Land of Israel, and a return towards the wilderness from which God had delivered Israel hundreds of years before. These were clearly steps in the *wrong* direction.



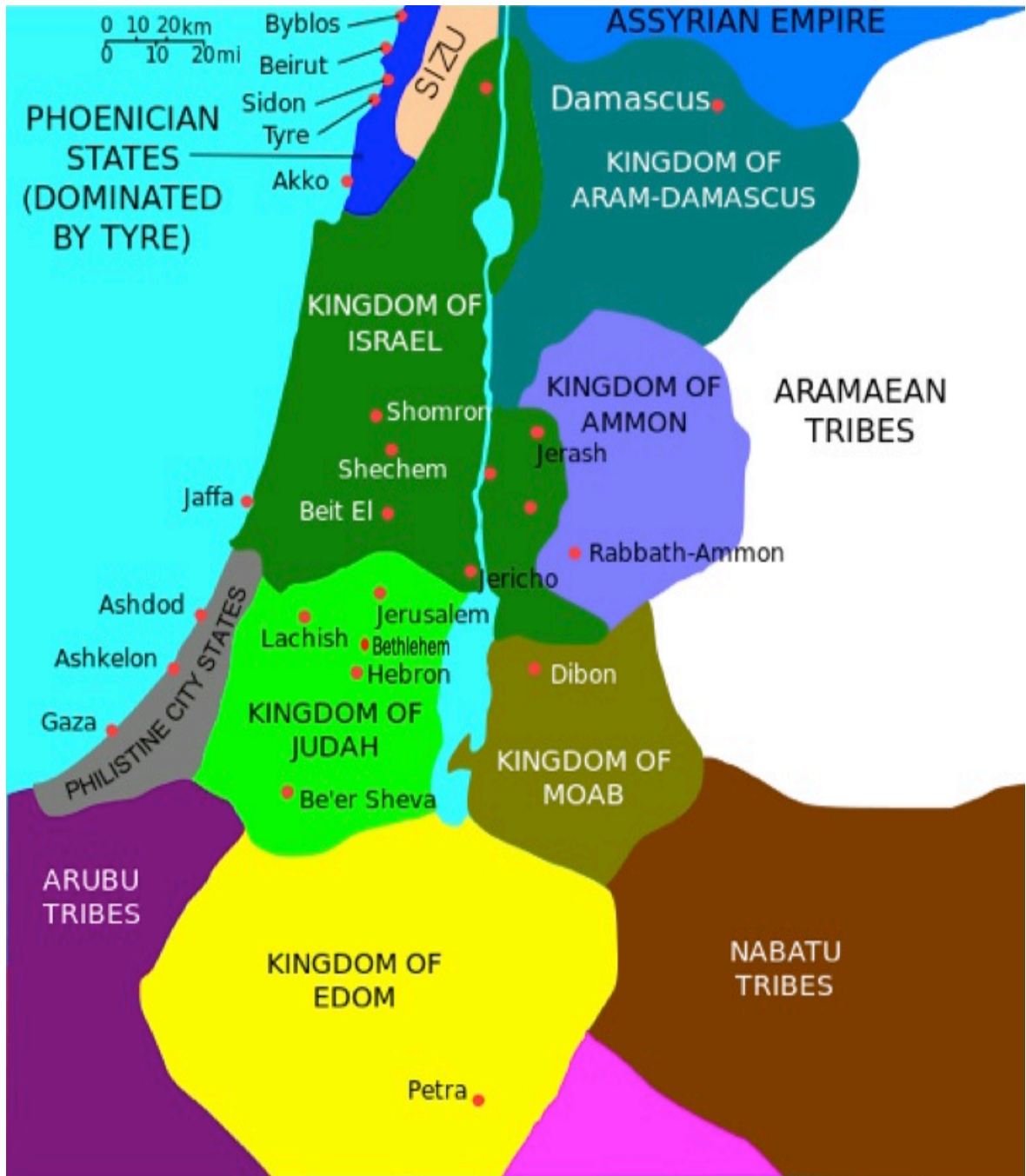


Figure 1-1 Map of Moab and surrounding kingdoms

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- **A famine in the land:** God specifically promised there would always be plenty in the land if Israel were obedient. Therefore, **a famine in the land** meant that Israel, as a nation, was not obedient unto the LORD (Deuteronomy 11:13-17).
- **Went to sojourn:** This means to leave with the intention to return. The next verse tells us the name of the man was *Elimelech* and his intention of short visit turned into ten-tragedy-filled years - and Elimelech never returned to Israel. The name *Elimelech* means, “God is king” - but he didn’t really live as if God was his king. Why? Because he didn’t trust God.
- The same can happen to the Christian believer who chooses to be led by the world and their flesh leaving the loving arms of God. But just as Israel did when they called upon the name of the Lord and he delivered them from the hands of their enemies, so too it is with us when we call upon Jesus to forgive us our sins, repent of it and He is faithful to forgive us.

## 2. (Ruth 1:2-5) Tragedy in Moab.

***“The name of Elimelech’s wife was Naomi and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion; Ephrathites of Bethlehem, located in the Southern Kingdom of Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. The name Ephrathites means descendants from the tribe of Ephraim who Joseph was the father of. Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died and she and her two sons were left. When these two sons became men, they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so Naomi survived her two sons and her husband.”***

- **Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died:** When Elimelech and his family came to Moab, they did not find life easier. Elimelech soon died, and his wife Naomi was left to care for their two boys, Mahlon and Chilion.

1. It is hard to say that this was the direct hand of God’s judgment against them. It is sometimes difficult to discern why tragic things happen. What

is certain is that the change of scenery didn't make things better. **In your opinion for the Christian Brother or Sister when tragedy strikes what is the first thing they should do?** Call upon the name of the Lord for David said: "The Lord is my light and my salvation; Whom shall I fear? The Lord is the strength of my life; Of whom shall I be afraid? 2 When the wicked came against me To eat up my flesh, My enemies and foes, They stumbled and fell. 3 Though an army may encamp against me, My heart shall not fear; Though war may rise against me, In this I will be confident" Psalm 27.

2. We sometimes think we can move away from our problems, but find we just bring them with us. No matter where you go, you bring yourself with you - so the same problems can continue in a different place. However, when we pray to God to lead us to where He would have us to go then life for us is much more fruitful; not without problems, but much more satisfying; but the key to all this is we must wait upon the Lord. Moreover, there have been many instances where people who come to Christ expecting not to have any more problems in life are sadly mistaken. Many new Brethren to the faith when faced with difficulties pray, but when their prayers are not answered in a timely manner, they lose faith, which can lead to a broken fellowship with God.

- **Now they took wives of the women of Moab:** Mahlon and Chilion grew, and took wives among the Moabite women, named Orpah and Ruth. Again, this was not in obedience to God; God commanded the Israelites to not marry among the pagan nations surrounding them ((Ref. Deut 7:3). **Why do you think that was so?** The same applies to the Christian believer and he tells in His word "do not be unequally yoked together with an unbeliever, for what in common does darkness have with light; what in common have righteousness with unrighteousness; what in common does God have with Belial (chief demon)" (2 Cor. 6:14). However, just as Israel disobeyed God in regards to taking pagan women for their wives, which led them into the sin of idolatry, we Christians are led down that same path of yoking with

an unbeliever or one who believes in another religion in hopes that we can change them.

- Just as the children of Israel were beguiled by the beauty of these pagan women, so too are we when we first meet a beautiful woman or handsome man and find that they are not Christian believers. Even though after a person has found that this man or woman does not believe in Christ as their Savior many make exceptions to the unequally yoke principle and many times this leads the believer into a situation where they no longer worship God as they should and many times not at all. The gold that you saw glitter in that woman's face or ladies, in that man's tongue, which you thought was so wonderful turned into fool's gold because after you gave your heart to him or her, all the hidden evil or unsavory characteristics surfaced and now your heart is trapped because you went ahead and married the person leading to a miserable life.
- **Both Mahlon and Chilion died:** As time went on (**about ten years**) Naomi's sons died. So now there were three childless widows - Naomi and her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth.
  1. To be a childless widow in that day was to be among the lowest, most disadvantaged classes in the ancient world. There was no one to support you, and you had to live on the generosity of strangers. Naomi had no family in Moab, and no one else to help her. It was a desperate situation. There was no social security; there was no Medicare; there was no government assistance available. Many of the women of that day and some this day when left with no other place to turn resort to prostitution and once in many can't find their way out. When time starts to catch up their bodies, they are no longer wanted by any man and now they are worse off then when they started.



B. The return to Judah.

**1. (Ruth 1:6-7) The three widows head back to Judah.**

**“Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. Therefore, she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.”**

- **She had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people:** From distant Moab, Naomi heard that God was doing good things back in Israel. She wanted to be part of the good things that God was doing.
  1. Our life with God should make others want to come back to the LORD just by looking at the way we live. Our walk with the LORD should be something that makes others say, “I want some of that also!” **In what ways do we show the world that we are children of the Almighty God?**
- **She went out from the place where she was:** This set Naomi apart from many others people. She could have stayed in Moab all of her life wishing things were different, but she did something to receive what God had to give her. Naomi didn’t wallow on the ground about her circumstances; she began the process of doing something about it.
  1. That occurs all too often in today’s world where people use alcohol and drugs to mask their pain and suffering not realizing that when they awake from the drunken state or stupor, the problems they sought to cure was right there still staring them in the face. If only they would have sought to see the problem for what it is and searched for reasonable avenues out of the situation instead of putting a band aid on the wound, they would have realized they were better off leaving substance abuse alone, facing and taking responsibility for their problem and doing something to solve the problem.

2. Let's say a person drinks because he/she does not like their circumstances in life; i.e. where they live: move. Who they are dating: get out of the relationship. Their marriage: communicate to your spouse the problems in the marriage. Loss of a former love or family member. In the case of a former love, maybe they were not meant for you; in the case of a lost family member, realize that their suffering is over and if they were a believer, they are actually better off than you.
3. Substance abuse is one of the things that the devil uses to make people weak and it is through that weakness that he attempts to keep them down so that they can eventually keep him company in hell and that's why I do not agree with the legalization of marijuana.

2. (Ruth 1:8-9) Naomi petitions her daughters-in-law to go back to Moab.

**“And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each to her mother’s house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband.” Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.”**

- **Go, return each to her mother’s house:** By all common sense, this was the wise thing to do. Orpah and Ruth had stronger family ties in Moab than they did with Naomi, so it made sense for them to stay in Moab instead of going to a new land - Israel - with Naomi.
- **The LORD deal kindly with you . . . The LORD grant that you may find rest:** With these words Naomi freely blessed them. She prayed that they would remarry (**each in the house of her husband**) because they were still young women.
  1. **Deal kindly** is the ancient Hebrew word *hesed*. “*Hesed* encompasses deeds of mercy performed by a more powerful party for the benefit of the weaker one.”
  2. In Ruth 1:9, Naomi described marriage as a place of **rest: The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband**. God

intends that each marriage be a place and source, of rest, peace, and refreshment in life.

- **She kissed them . . . they lifted up their voices and wept:** This emotion shown is evidence of the real relationship of love between Naomi and her daughters-in-law.



Figure 1-2, Ruth, Naomi and Orpah

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3. (Ruth 1:10-13) Naomi pleads with her daughters-in-law to stay in Moab.

**“And they said to her, “Surely we will return with you to your people.” But Naomi said, “Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? *Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!”***

- **Are there still sons in my womb:** According to the laws of ancient Israel, if a young woman was left widowed, without having had a son, and then one of her deceased husband’s brothers was responsible for being a “surrogate father” and providing her with a son. Naomi here says that she has no other sons to give either Orpah or Ruth.
- **The hand of the LORD has gone out against me:** This obviously weighed heavily on Naomi’s heart and mind. She felt that the calamity, which came upon her family, came because they were disobedient, probably in leaving the Promised Land of Israel and marrying their sons to Moabite women.
- **The hand of the LORD has gone out against me:** Despite this feeling, Naomi is going back to the land of Israel - and going back to her God. Though she felt that the **hand of the LORD has gone out against me**, she did not grow bitter against God. She returned to Him in repentance, knowing that the answer is drawing *closer to Him*, not running *further from Him*.
  1. How many times when extreme tragedy strikes a person or a family they get so mad with God that they abandon Him not realizing that in doing so they make their way twice as hard. God stands at the door of each person and knocks asking to be accepted in, but if one rejects Him, He does not force himself on anyone. This rejection can lead to hard bitterness on the part of the individual causing strife, confusion and a contentious heart their whole life and can lead to eternity in a place they don’t want to be.

2. Naomi didn't accuse God of doing something wrong against her. She acknowledged His total control over all circumstances. It was actually an expression of trust in Him. How many times a worldly person who doesn't even believe in God will blame Him for a tragic loss or unsavory circumstance they find themselves in; saying things like: "God hates me so I'm going to hate Him back" or "God never answers any of my prayers so I'm not going to continue to have Him in my life." All these are copouts of course, yet if the individual would only look in the mirror first when trying to place blame.
3. What Naomi could not see is that the hand of the LORD would go out *for* her shortly! There is never a reason for us to despair if we believe **the hand of the LORD has gone out against us**. If we will return to Him, His hand will go out *for us* again! Naomi had no idea - not the slightest - of how greatly God was going to bless her in a short time. Moreover, when we feel that God is punishing us, many times it is because of sin or chastisement. To understand the reason for a harsh circumstance we need to know God so we can discern which is which and to know Him we have to read His Word. Psalm 94:12 says, "Blessed is the man whom you chasten, O LORD, and who you teach out of your law."

**4. (Ruth 1:14) Orpah stays in Moab; Ruth continues on with Naomi.**

**"Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her."**

- **They lifted up their voices and wept again:** Both Orpah and Ruth felt deeply; both loved Naomi; both were anxious about the future. But a choice had to be made, and Orpah chose to stay in Moab, while Ruth **clung to** Naomi.
- **Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her:** There comes a place in our following after God where it comes down to *doing*. Ruth and Orpah both felt the same feelings but Ruth *did* differently than Orpah. In your opinion, why was

Ruth willing to stay with her mother-in-law and while Orpah chose to stay in Moab? The hand of the Lord was upon one and not the other.

- **Orpah kissed her mother-in-law:** What happened to Orpah? Of course, we don't know. But men have always concocted traditions to make up for what they don't know. Jewish traditions say this request of Naomi came four miles outside of Moab; and that Orpah shed only four tears over the thought of parting from her mother-in-law Naomi. But the rabbis go on to say that in recompense for the four miles that she went with Naomi, Orpah gave birth to four sons - Goliath and his three brothers.





Figure 1-3 Ruth clings to Naomi as Orpah sadly returns to Moab  
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**5. (Ruth 1:15-18) Ruth's eloquent statement of faith.**

**“And she said, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said: “Entreat me not to leave you, *Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.” When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.”***

- **Look, your sister-in-law has gone:** Naomi did what she could to discourage Ruth from coming with her back to Israel. It wasn't that Naomi didn't want Ruth to come, but she didn't want a fair weather friend either.
- **Wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people:** This was a noble - even outstanding - friend-to-friend commitment. But Ruth's commitment to Naomi went even further: **And your God, [will be] my God.** That ladies and gentlemen shows both love and true devotion. How wonderful it would be if the world showed such love and devotion for God Almighty? If that happen, man would not go part ways with God, but all the way.
  1. This was more than change of address. Ruth was willing to forsake the Moabite gods she grew up with, and embrace the God of Israel. She was deciding to follow the LORD. This Gentile woman, once far from God, had drawn near to Him.
  2. As I stated earlier in this commentary, the principle god of the Moabites was Chemosh and I said the name meant “destroyer.” It meant destroyer because the Moabites believed in human blood sacrifice. Let's go to 2 Kings and says, “When the king of Moab saw that the battle had gone against him, he took with him seven hundred swordsmen to break through to the king of Edom, but they failed. 27 Then he took his firstborn son, who was to succeed him as king, and offered him as a sacrifice on the city wall.

The fury against Israel was great; they withdrew and returned to their own land” (2 Kings 3:26-27).

**And your God, [will be] my God** meant that Naomi’s relationship with God made an impact on Ruth. This is striking, because Naomi did not have an easy life. She had been widowed, had lost both her sons, and believed that she had caused each calamity by her disobedience. Yet, she still honored and loved the LORD. In today’s environment, an unbeliever would have probably abandoned God and gone back to their former life.

\*I’ve heard the question asked: “does God hear the prayer of the unbeliever?” Here is the answer and it is found in the book of Isaiah and the gospel of John and says, “But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you, So that He will not hear (Isaiah 59:2). Now we know that God does not hear sinners; but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does His will, He hears him (John 9:31).

3. Ruth’s acceptance of God was very similar to that of Rehab in the book of Joshua who accepted the God of Israel when the walls of Jericho were about to come down and like Ruth, would be in the Messianic line of Jesus Christ (Ref. Joshua 2:12-13).
  4. People should be able to look at your life, just as Ruth looked at Naomi’s, and say “I want your God to be my God.” Your trust in God, and turning towards Him in *tough* times, will often be the thing that draws others to the LORD. Ruth was exercising faith. **In your opinion what is Faith.** Faith is the substance of things hoped for; the evidence of things not seen. (Heb 11:1).
- **Your God, my God:** For ten years Naomi’s compromise in Moab never made Ruth confess her allegiance to the God of Israel. Yet as soon as Naomi stood and said, “I’m going back to the God of Israel, I’ll put my fate in His hands” Ruth stood with her. Several of my own close relatives have not accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior even though I have tried to convince them otherwise and shown them through the way I live my life that a relationship with Jesus brings a joy that no

human being on earth can take away; no matter the circumstances; no matter the pain. Let me give you an example of what I am talking about. A famous boxer was imprisoned for a crime involving domestic violence for 90 days. Because of his celebrity, the warden was forced to put him in solitary confinement for his own safety. He stated that while he lived in the dark most of the time the only friends he had were the roaches in his cell that he would talk too. Although he depended on insects for comfort, he didn't allow the system to steal his joy because he has said he believes in Jesus Christ. When Jesus Christ is in your life and you find yourself in a similar situation, talking to Him allows you to have a peace that no man can take away because "He would never leave nor forsake you." You see, we are all prisoners to sin whether we know it or not.

- **The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me:** Ruth had little knowledge of the true God, the God of Israel - but she knew He was a God of fairness and justice, so He could be called upon to hold Ruth accountable to this promise. She had probably already seen what the god of the Moabites was all about since many sacrificed their children to him.

**6. (Ruth 1:19-21)** Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem.

**“Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” But she said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”**

- **The two of them went until they came to Bethlehem:** It was a long walk from Moab to Bethlehem, and the trip was mostly uphill. We can imagine along the way, Ruth asking her mother-in-law Naomi all about the God of Israel and the land of Israel.

- **All the city was excited because of them:** Bethlehem was just a large village; everyone in the village would have known everyone else, and remembered those who had left years ago.
- **Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara:** The name **Naomi** means “pleasant”; the name **Mara** means “bitter.” Naomi used this to tell the people of Bethlehem that her time away from Israel, her time away from the God of Israel, had not been pleasant - it was bitter. Evidently, Naomi remembered her parents teaching her about the book of Exodus which was mandatory in all Jewish households to teach not only Exodus, but also all the first five books of the Old Testament called the Pentateuch. In Exodus 15:23 says, “When they came to Marah, they could not drink its water because it was bitter. (That is why the place is called Marah.)”



Figure 1-4 Naomi is welcomed Back to Bethlehem

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- **The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me . . . the LORD has brought me home again empty . . . the LORD has testified against me:** Naomi was not afraid to testify that the hand of God was involved in all her calamities.
  1. Naomi knew that the tragedy that came into her life was not because of fate, chance, or blind fortune. She felt the tragedies were an example of God’s affliction because she could not see the end of His plan. But she knew there was a sovereign God of heaven, and didn’t think she had just run into a string of “bad luck.” You and I should never depend on luck nor wish others good luck (even though in society it is a habit), for good luck has its foundation in paganism involving twin gods Gad and Meni involving fate and fortune (Ref. Isaiah 65:11). When we as Christians receive something fortunate it is a blessing and when we face trials we should count it all towards joy. The book of James says, “Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds” (James 1:2).
  2. Yet, in the midst of all these bitter circumstances, Naomi was *not* bitter against the LORD. We can imagine one of the villagers asking, “Naomi, if God has dealt very bitterly with you, if the LORD has brought you home empty, if the LORD has testified against you, then why have you come back?” And she would have said, “Because I want to get right with Him again. Things have been terrible, and the answer isn’t in going further from God, but in drawing closer to Him.”

#### **7. (Ruth 1:22) So Naomi returned . . .**

**“So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.”**

- **So Naomi returned:** Naomi came back repentant and honest. She has felt that *the Almighty has afflicted me*. But in the coming chapters, it will be shown the Almighty will bless her. If only she could see it!



1. In the face of adversities in our lives, how many of us fail to look at the big picture when we can't seem (in the immediacy of the situation) understand what's happening to us. When we are faced with calamities of life, the first thing we should do is pray and not try to handle the situation all by ourselves, but ask for God's comfort and guidance. The problem with many in society when faced with extreme adversities is the first thing they try and do is figure out how to solve the situation on their own leading to worry, strife and yes bitterness. Learning to immediately seek the face of God in an extreme situation goes a long way in finding a resolution to the problem.
- **Now they came to Bethlehem:** It would have been easy for Naomi to focus on what she had lost. She had lost a husband, two sons, and one daughter-in-law. She had lost all kinds of material possessions. All she had left was one daughter-in-law, Ruth. But through that one thing she had left, God was going to bring unbelievable blessing into her life.
  1. All the good that happens to Naomi and Ruth in the future chapters begins her: With Naomi's godly repentance and honesty. It will make a difference not only in her life, but in the life of her daughter-in-law Ruth - and in the destiny of the nation Israel - and in your eternal salvation.

# Ruth Chapter 2

A. Ruth gleanes in Boaz's field.

## 1. (Ruth 2:1) Naomi's kinsman: Boaz.

**“There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.”**

- **Naomi had a kinsman:** Naomi was related to this man Boaz through her deceased husband, Elimelech. We don't know exactly how he was related, but he was.
- **A man of great wealth:** During the time of famine, when Elimelech, Naomi, and their whole family had left the Promised Land and went to Moab, Boaz had stayed behind - and God provided for him. In fact, God made Boaz **a man of great wealth**. When people think of wealth they mostly think of material possessions, but a man can be as wealthy as a billionaire, but be bankrupt in spirit and if that's the case, he or she doesn't have much.

- 1 Naomi and her family made a choice ten years before and it was a choice made in a hard time - a time of famine. But they didn't *have* to make the wrong choice they did. The people of Bethlehem had not perished from hunger. They were still there and they were blessed more than Naomi's family.
- 2 Sometimes we justify wrong choices because of difficult circumstances and our hardheadedness allows us to stay in our difficult circumstances. But God still wants to strengthen us, and bless us to make the right choice, even in difficult circumstances but to find out what those choices are, we must pray for His guidance and not be afraid to ask Him questions of who, what when and how.

- **A kinsman:** This introduces an important word in the book of Ruth - the ancient Hebrew word is *goel*. To say that Boaz was *a goel* (a kinsman) was more than

saying he was a relative; it was saying that he was a special family representative. He was a patriarch in the family.



Figure 2-1 Ruth gleaning in the fields of Boaz

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## 2. (Ruth 2:2-3) Ruth happens upon Boaz's field.

“So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, “Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.”

- **Please, let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain:** Leviticus 19:9-10 commanded farmers in Israel that they should not completely harvest their fields
- They were commanded to “cut corners” in harvesting, and always leave some behind. Also, if they happened to drop a bundle of grain, they were commanded to leave it on the ground and to not pick it up.
  - 1 This was one of the social assistance programs in Israel. Farmers were not to completely harvest their fields, so the poor and needy could come and glean the remains for themselves.
  - 2 This was a wonderful way of helping the poor. It commanded the farmers to have a generous heart, and it commanded the poor to be active and work for their food - and a way for them to provide for their own needs with dignity. This was a way of God giving a hand up and not a handout.
- **Handup vs Handout**
  1. A hand up allows a person to have dignity
  2. A handout although helpful can cause someone to become dependent
  3. A hand up fulfills a biblical principle outlined in 2 Thess. 3:10, “For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”
  4. A handout can become a permanent crutch where individual (s) never move out of their comfort zones; endeavoring to always remain on government assistance or assistance from others.
  5. A handup (for example in education) fosters opportunity and growth not only in community but nation.

6. Handouts are a form of social welfare and many times can become a one-way street, but should focus on education, training and acquiring job skills leading to dependency on oneself instead of the government.
7. There is an old saying “would you rather fish for a person or teach them to fish for themselves.” You want to teach them to fish for themselves so they provide for their own life.

- **Then she left:** So Ruth, on her own initiative, set out to glean in the fields to support her and her mother-in-law Naomi. This showed a wonderfully hard-working spirit in Ruth - she would not have been more spiritual to sit back at home and pray for food.
- **She happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz:** It says that Ruth **happened** to come to that place and certainly, that is how it seemed to her. But it was not how it actually came to pass. Ruth came to that field because God was guiding her; God ordered her steps (Ref. Psalm 119:133).

- 1 This shows us some of the wonderful ways that the invisible hand of God works. If Ruth would have stayed home and waited for a “spiritual” feeling,” she probably might have waited a long time - and still probably would have gone to the wrong field. Instead, Ruth experienced the very *natural* moving of the *supernatural* hand of God.
- 2 This reminds me of a story about the prophet Elijah as told in 1<sup>st</sup> Kings 17 and says: And Elijah the Tishbite, of the inhabitants of Gilead, said to Ahab, "As the Lord God of Israel lives, before whom I stand, there shall not be dew nor rain these years, except at my word." **2**Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, **3** "Get away from here and turn eastward, and hide by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. **4** And it will be that you shall drink from the brook, and I have commanded the ravens to feed you there." **5** So he went and did according to the word of the Lord, for he went and stayed by the Brook Cherith, which flows into the Jordan. **6**The ravens brought him bread and meat in the morning, and bread and meat in the evening; and he drank from the brook; **7** And it happened after a while that the brook dried up, because there had been no

rain in the land. 8 Then the word of the Lord came to him, saying, 9 "Arise, go to Zarephath, which belongs to Sidon, and dwell there. See, I have commanded a widow there to provide for you." Elijah listened and waited on God and God took care of him. If he did that with one of his prophets, he will certainly do it for one of His children" (1 Kings 17:1-9).

### 3. (Ruth 2:4-7) Boaz learns of Ruth.

**“Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, “The LORD be with you!” And they answered him, “The LORD bless you!” Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, “Whose young woman is this?” So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, “It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”**

- **The LORD be with you!** This shows us something of the heart and character of Boaz. Apparently, his workers loved him and had a good relationship with him. You can often tell the real character of a man in authority by seeing how he relates to his staff and by what they think of him.
- **And she said, “Please let me glean and gather”:** As the supervisor reported to Boaz, he told of Ruth’s submissive attitude. There is a sense in which the gleaning was hers by *right* - after all, she could have quoted Leviticus 19:9-10 back at him. But she kindly and properly asked for the right to gather in his field.
- **So she came and has continued from morning until now:** Ruth may not have known it, but she was under inspection. The supervisor was looking at what kind of job she did and he was impressed that she did a good job. Her job performance was important, because it made a good impression on Boaz.

1 We are under inspection also. At times when we don’t know it, we are being watched by others to see how we will walk with God. What they



see will make a *difference in how they choose to accept or reject a walk with Christ*. If the world sees Christians being hypocrites, then we are not doing our job of showing them of what it means to be Christ-like.



Figure 2-2 Ruth happens upon Boaz  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=free+domain+pictures+of+ruth+and+naomi&tbm=isch>

4. (Ruth 2:8-9) Boaz speaks kindly to Ruth.

**“Then Boaz said to Ruth, “You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. *Let your eyes be on the field, which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.*”**

- **Stay close by my young women:** These were Boaz’s female field workers, who tied together the cut stalks of grain. Boaz told Ruth to stay close to them, so she would be well taken care of.
- **Do not go to glean in another field:** God was blessing Ruth already and all because He guided her to Boaz’s field. Boaz knew that if Ruth stayed in his fields, she would be blessed and find:

In Boaz’s field, Ruth would find *companionship* (among the **young women**).

In Boaz’s field, Ruth would find *protection* (**Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you?**).

In Boaz’s field, Ruth would find *refreshment* (**when you are thirsty**).

1. The *kindness* of Boaz was wonderful. At this time, we have no indication of a romantic attraction between Boaz and Ruth and we have no idea how Ruth looked (even if she was pretty, she was probably pretty ragged from a whole day of hard work). Yet Boaz extended this kindness to her.
2. We find it pretty easy to be kind to others when we can see a potential pay-off from the investment of our kindness. Yet, true kindness is shown when we extend ourselves to others who, as far as we can see, have nothing to give us. Also, many find it easier to extend kindness to the well-dressed person vs. the one with raggedy clothes; the good-

looking person vs. the one who does not have good looks; the well-educated person vs. a person who just has a high-school diploma or little education at all. The bottom line here is that we should treat others with kindness regardless of their status in life—That’s being Christ like!

**5. (Ruth 2:10-13)** Ruth thanks Boaz for his kindness.

**“So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?” And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and *how* you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”**

- **Why have I found favor in your eyes:** Ruth’s attitude was wonderful. Some of us would have said, “Well it’s about time someone noticed! I’ve been working hard all day. Now God will give me the blessings that I deserve.”
  1. We never see Ruth asking why all the *hard things* have come upon her in life. Instead, she asks why this *good thing* has come. This is a significant difference in attitude. A person’s attitude in life is important. Some go through life thinking that life owes them something while others thank God for just the little things. When we acknowledge God’s work in our lives, He smiles and continues to bless us. **What are you most thankful?**
  2. **Let’s go to the Gospel of Luke regarding the Pharisee and the tax collector and says, “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee stood and**

prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector.’<sup>12</sup> I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’<sup>13</sup> And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise *his* eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’<sup>14</sup> I tell you, this man went down to his house justified *rather* than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’ (Luke 18:10-14)

- **Since I am a foreigner:** This was constantly on Ruth’s mind. She was a Moabitess, and not an Israelite. She knew that on the basis of national background, she didn’t belong. This made Boaz’s kindness to her all the more precious. We as human beings all fell the need to belong to some type of social order and when that does not happen, we fell rejected and may lead to unhappiness, loneliness, strife and even depression can occur. That’s why it is so important in a church setting for the members of a church to make strangers or newcomers feel welcome. If you have a visitor to your home and they leave felling unwelcomed, they’re not coming back; the same goes for the house of God for we want those strangers or newcomers to come back.
- **It has been reported to me:** This is a dynamic of small-town life; everybody knows everybody else’s business. Yet it also shows that Ruth’s devotion to Naomi mattered - it was noticed.
- **The Lord repay your work and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel:** Fittingly, Boaz encouraged Ruth as if she were a new convert to the God of Israel. In many ways, Ruth stands as an example of a new convert.
  1. She put her trust in the God of Israel, which equals faith
  2. She has left her former associates; when we become a saved Christian we leave behind those friends that had a bad influence on our lives. The book of Ephesians says, “But you have not so learned Christ, 21 if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught by

Him, as the truth is in Jesus: 22 that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, 23 and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, 24 and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness” ( Ephesians 4:20-24).

3. She had come in among strangers; we all feel a bit of apprehension when we first come among strangers be it on our job or in the house of worship.
4. She was very low in her own eyes; being humbled is one of the requirements for a Christian believer for God does not like pride in our lives. (Ref. Prov. 16:18).
5. She found protection under the wings of God; this protection is like a hen that protects its chicks and Jesus said: “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! Matthew 23:37. The world is not willing to gather under Jesus Christ, but He brings salvation to those who worship and believe in Him nevertheless.

- **Let me find favor in your sight:** This was a very polite way of saying “thank you” to Boaz. Ruth was almost overwhelmed by his kindness, and was polite enough to say “Thank you.” Saying thank you to others goes a long way in showing that you are mindful of not only their cooperation, but as a human being as well.

**6. (Ruth2:14-16)** Boaz continues to show great favor to Ruth.

**“Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, “Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even**

**among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”**

- **Dip your bread in the vinegar:** Perhaps now, we see the first hint of a romance; this is like an informal dinner date. Boaz showed great kindness and favor to Ruth at mealtime. It would be enough to have just invited her, but he also invited her to share fully in the meal, even the privileged of dipping.
- **She ate and was satisfied, and kept some back:** Ruth also may be awakening to some romance towards Boaz; she **kept some back**. She did not eat all that was offered to her, meaning that she didn't want to seem like a greedy eater in front of Boaz, and that she was sensible enough to take some home to Naomi.
  1. Ruth was satisfied, because she answered the generous invitation of Boaz. She was not one of the reapers, but **she sat beside the reapers** and ate as if she was one of them and **she ate and was satisfied**. In the same way, those outside the Kingdom of God and its promises can sit among the reapers, at the invitation of Jesus, and by faith they can eat and be **satisfied by the bread of fellowship in Christ** where they will never go hungry.
  2. **Let her glean even among the sheaves:** This was more generous than the command in Leviticus 19:9-10. Boaz would allow Ruth to take some from among the already gathered sheaves of grain. Now what are sheaves? It is a bundle of barley or wheat tied together.
- **Let some grain from the bundles fall purposefully for her:** This was also beautiful. Boaz wanted to bless Ruth, but he didn't want to dishonor her dignity by making her a charity case. So he allowed some grain to fall, supposedly on accident, so that she could pick it up. Boaz did something for Ruth and she did something for herself. Many folks today are too lazy to work. They give excuses like: I can't do that kind of manual labor; I wasn't born to do that type of work etc. But the bible tells us in Proverbs: "A lazy person becomes a servant (or debtor): "Diligent hands will rule, but laziness ends in slave labor" (12:24); his future is bleak: "A sluggard does not plow in season; so at harvest time he looks but finds

nothing” (20:4); he may come to poverty: “The soul of the lazy man desires and has nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made rich” (13:4 KJV).

B. Ruth reports the day’s events to Naomi.

1. **(Ruth 2:17-18)** She brings home the day’s fruits to Naomi.

**“So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.”**

- **She gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned:** Yes, God blessed Ruth. Yes, people were generous to her. At the same time, she did work hard. This was a sun-up to sun-down day, and Ruth worked hard all day long.

1. We should use Ruth’s example to glean everything we can from the Word of God, which enriches our spiritual walk with Christ:

- Ruth worked hard. We need to witness to others and not allow fear to hold us back from that.
- Ruth had to stoop to gather every grain. We need to be humble.
- Ruth could only pick up one grain at a time. We need to live one day at a time and not worry about tomorrow for tomorrow will take care of itself.
- Ruth had to hold on to each grain, and not immediately drop it. We need to be careful with the Word of God holding onto every morsel of every word, which brings about wisdom.

- Ruth took the grain home and threshed it. After we study God's word we need to meditate on it. Meditate means to consider carefully.
- Ruth took the threshed grain and winnowed it. To winnow grain means to remove unwanted parts of it. We need to winnow out sin in our lives on the threshing floor of this world.
- Ruth was nourished by the grain. We find nourishment from the Word of God, while at the same time applying it to our lives.



Figure 2-3 Ruth Picking and Carrying Wheat



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- **It was about an ephah of barley:** This was about a five-and-one-half gallon tub (22 liters) of barley - a wonderful day's work to people who had nothing.
- **Gave to her what she had kept back:** Besides all the barley grain, Ruth brought Naomi the food left over from the meal with Boaz. This was obviously a blessing for Naomi.

2. (Ruth 2:19-23) Naomi praises God for His goodness to her and Ruth.

**“And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.” So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today is Boaz.” Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed *be* he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.” Ruth the Moabite said, “He also said to me, ‘You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.’ “ And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, “*It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field.*” So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.”**

- **Blessed be the name of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!** Is this the same woman who came into town saying, *call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me* (Ruth 1:20)? Is this the same woman who said, *the Almighty has afflicted me* (Ruth 1:21)? Of course it is! Now she sees more of God’s plan unfolding, so she can see better how all things are working together for good for those who love God. (Romans 8:28).

- **It is good, my daughter:** Of course, Naomi told Ruth, “Stay with this man Boaz!” Not only was he generous, he was **one of our near kinsmen** - the importance of which will be unfolded in the coming chapters.

# Ruth Chapter 3

A. Naomi's instructions to Ruth.

1. (Ruth 3:1-2 Security for Ruth through a kinsman.

**“Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative?”**

- **Then Naomi her mother-in-law said:** The time of the harvest was over, and certainly Ruth and Boaz had been around each other many weeks covering the barley and the wheat harvest (Ref. Ruth 2:23). They had many opportunities to get to know each other.
  1. However, according to the customs of the day, we can't say that Ruth and Boaz were “dating” in the way we think of “dating” in our modern culture. They were not paired off as a couple with one-on-one time with each other; rather, they spent their time together in the context of a group with the men and women who worked for Boaz in the harvest; in other words, they had a working relationship.
  2. From God's perspective, there is much in the “dating game” that works against forming healthy, lasting relationships: The immediate problem when it comes to dating (where God is concerned) is sex before marriage. Moreover, for many people, dating means the continual making and breaking of casual romantic relationships - patterns that teach us more how to end relationships than how to make them last; that negative pattern continues when couples choose to live together instead of getting married. Living together shows a lack of

commitment to the relationship and a lack of trust in what God who has ordained marriage.

3. Additionally, “dating” is usually a relatively superficial way to get to know someone. Each person in a dating relationship tends to put on a mask for the other. **In your opinion, when does that mask come off?** For example, many women have been deceived into thinking a man is a good, nice man because he is nice to them in a dating relationship. Of course he is! Often, he’s nice because he wants something in that dating relationship. A better gauge to measure the man or the woman is to see how they act towards others in a group setting - because sooner or later, that is how they are going to treat you.
  4. So over the period of the harvests, Ruth and Boaz got to know each other pretty well - by seeing what kind of people the other was around a larger group, not by dating in the way it is traditionally thought of today.
- **Shall I not seek security for you:** Naomi knew that Ruth could best be taken care of if she was married, so she suggested that she appeal to Boaz for marriage.
    1. The Hebrew word for **security** in verse one is the same word for *rest* in Ruth 1:9, where Naomi hoped that her daughters-in-law would find rest and security in the home of a new husband. This Hebrew word (*manowach*) speaks of what a home should be - a place of rest and security. For us as believers our place of rest and security is Jesus Christ for in Him we find peace, tranquility that is like lying beside a cool spring with flowers all around with a crystal clear blue sky above. Jesus says, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.” Matthew 11:29

- **Now Boaz . . . Is he not our relative?** One might easily think that this was inappropriately forward of Naomi to suggest this to Ruth. It is possible to think that Naomi plotted with Ruth to make her a man-trap, to go out and hunt down a reluctant Boaz for marriage. Not at all. Naomi's suggestion to Ruth was rooted in a peculiar custom in ancient Israel - the meaning behind the Hebrew word *goel* which means to redeem.

1. This was the point in Naomi's question about Boaz: **Is he not our relative?** She reminded Ruth that Boaz was their family *goel*.

2. The *goel* - had a specifically defined role in Israel's family life.

- The kinsman-redeemer was responsible to buy a fellow Israelite out of slavery (Leviticus 25:48).
- He was responsible to be the "avenger of blood" to make sure the murderer of a family member answered to the crime (Numbers 35:19).
- He was responsible to buy back family land that had been forfeited (Leviticus 25:25).
- He was responsible to carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10).

3. In this, we see that the *goel*, the kinsman-redeemer, was responsible to safeguard the *persons*, the *property*, and the *posterity* (*future generation*) of the family. "Words from the root *g'l* are used with a variety of meanings in the Old Testament, but the fundamental idea is that of fulfilling one's obligations as a kinsman.

- **Is he not our relative?** Since Boaz was a recognized *goel* for the family of Elimelech - the deceased husband of Naomi and father-in-law of Ruth - Ruth could

appeal to him to safeguard the posterity of Elimelech's family, and take her in marriage. It may seem forward to us, but it was regarded as proper in that day.

1. If Boaz did not fulfill this duty towards Elimelech (though he was now deceased), then the direct family and name of Elimelech would perish. Perpetuating the family name of Elimelech (and every man in Israel) was thought to be an important duty. These protections showed how important it was to God to preserve the institution of the family in Israel and that it is also important to Him today in regards to the institution of marriage. Man has now chosen to slam to the ground the ordination of marriage by God allowing same-sex couples to marry even though He gives us so many scriptures to the contrary in that regard (Ref. Leviticus 18:22, 20:13; Matthew 19:4-5; Romans 1:26-28; 1 Timothy 1:10; Revelation 21:8, and 21:27).

**2. (Ruth 3:2-5)** Naomi instructs Ruth as to how to petition Boaz to exercise his responsibilities as her *goel*.

“In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. Therefore, wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.” And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”

**\*Why do women wear perfume besides smelling good? To make one happy due to the smell of the fragrance; helps self-esteem and makes one feel attractive and in some circumstances to attract a man.**

- **Therefore wash yourself:** Naomi, in her advice to Ruth, showed a keen knowledge of male behavior. She instructed Ruth to make herself pretty and smelling good (**anoint yourself (put on some perfume), put on your best garment**), and to

leave Boaz alone while he ate (**do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking**).

- **Uncover his feet, and lie down:** At the appropriate time, Naomi instructs Ruth to **go in, uncover his feet, and lie down**. Some might think this was a provocative gesture, as if Ruth was told to provocatively offer herself sexually to Boaz. This was not how this gesture was understood in that day. In the culture of that day, this was understood as an act of *total submission*.
- In that day, this was understood to be the role of a servant - to lie at their master's feet and be ready for any command of the master. So, when Naomi told Ruth to **lie down** at Boaz's feet, she told her to come to him in a totally humble, submissive way. We are to do the same in regards to our worship in Jesus Christ; to come to Him otherwise invites trouble. Let me go back to the book of Exodus for a moment to talk about two Levite Priest in training who chose to come to God in a manner not befitting of a great and wonderful God. The names of these two men are Nadab and Abihu. "1 Now Nadab and Abihu, the sons of Aaron, each took his censer and put fire in it and laid incense on it and offered strange fire before the LORD, which he had not commanded them.2 And fire came out from before the LORD and consumed them, and they died before the LORD.3 Then Moses said to Aaron, "This is what the LORD has said, 'Among those who are near me I will be sanctified, and before all the people I will be glorified.'" And Aaron held his peace." Leviticus 10:1-3.

1. Don't lose sight of the larger picture: Ruth came to claim a right. Boaz was her *goel*, her kinsman-redeemer, and she had the *right* to expect him to marry her and raise up a family to perpetuate the name of Elimelech. But Naomi wisely counseled Ruth to not come as a victim demanding her rights, but as a humble servant, trusting in the goodness of her kinsman-redeemer. She said to Boaz, "I respect you, I trust you, and I put my fate in your hands. To come at someone in a

domineering or demanding way is counterproductive to good order and discipline because it sets up barriers by throwing the other party off guard creating discourse and confusion.

- **He will tell you what you should do:** Of course, this was a situation that had the potential for disaster, if Boaz should mistreat Ruth in some way. But Naomi and Ruth had the chance to get to know Boaz, and they knew what kind of man he was - a good man, a godly man, one to whom Ruth could confidently submit.

1. In the marriage relationship, many husbands wish they had a wife who submitted to them the way Ruth is being told to do here. But do they provide the kind of godly leadership, care, and concern that Boaz showed towards Ruth and others? Although women are told to submit to their husbands no matter what unless it is contrary to biblical principles, the worldly woman will have a hard time submitting to her husband as outlined in the bible. The worldly woman looks at the marriage like a business partnership where decisions are made together and if both cannot reach a decision together, then it doesn't get made. The Christian woman who understands God's direction in regards to submissiveness prefers that decisions be made together, but when the chips are down and a disagreement arises over what must be done in a given situation, she knows that her husband has the final say; why. Because God has given leadership in the family to the man. (Ref. Genesis 3:16; Ephesians 5:24-28; 1<sup>st</sup> Timothy 2:14-15.
2. In the marriage relationship, many wives wish they had a husband who loved, cared, and treated them the way Boaz did towards Ruth. But do they show the same kind of humble submission and respect Ruth showed to Boaz? Men need to treat their wives like a royal diadem, which the book of Isaiah says, "You shall be a crown of beauty in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of your God" (Isaiah 62:3). What is a royal diadem? A Crown worn by a king



symbolizing royalty and if men treat their wives like they are royal queens, then submissiveness on their part becomes active instead of reactive.

- **All that you say to me I will do:** Ruth humbly and wisely received the counsel of her mother-in-law Naomi.

1. On the whole, we must say, had not Boaz been a person of extraordinary piety, prudence, and continence, this experiment might have been fatal to Ruth. We cannot easily account for this transaction; probably Naomi knew more than she revealed to her daughter-in-law. The experiment however was dangerous, and should in no sense be imitated. Because the world no longer revere nor wish to understand God through His Word as we Christians believers do.

#### B. Ruth and Boaz at the threshing floor.

- **First of all what is a threshing floor?** After the harvest, the grain was separated from the straw and husks by beating it manually. There had to be a flat surface that was smooth and hard and this was known as the threshing floor. The process of threshing was performed generally by spreading the sheaves on the threshing floor and causing oxen and cattle to tread repeatedly over them, loosening the edible part of cereal grain (or other crop) from the scaly, inedible chaff that surrounds it (Deuteronomy 25:4; Isaiah 28:28). On occasions flails or sticks were used for this purpose (Ruth 2:17; Isaiah 28:27). Then winnowing forks were used to throw the mixture into the air so the wind could blow away the chaff, leaving only the good grain on the floor.
- Both the Old and New Testaments refer to the threshing floor as a symbol of judgment. Hosea prophesied that because Israel has repeatedly turned from God to false idols, His judgment upon them would scatter them to the winds as the chaff from the threshing floor. “Therefore they will be like the morning mist, like the

early dew that disappears, like chaff swirling from a threshing floor, like smoke escaping through a window” (Hosea 9:2).

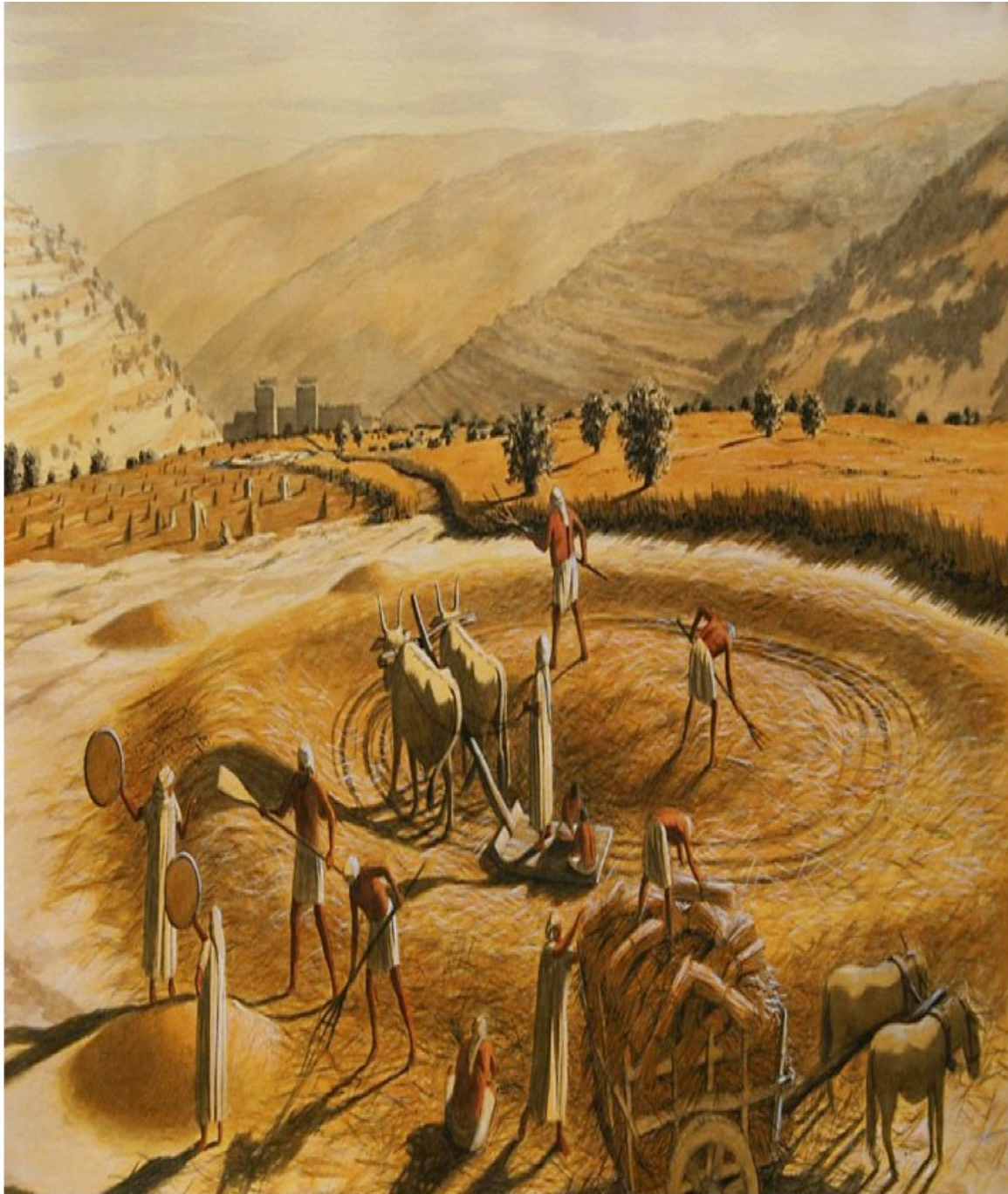


Figure 3-1 Grain being Threshed

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1. (Ruth 3:6-7) Ruth lies down at Boaz's feet.

**“So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.”**

- **He went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain:** There was a good reason why Boaz slept at the **threshing floor**. These were the days of the Judges, when there was much political and social instability in Israel. It wasn't unusual for a gang of thieves to come and steal all the hard-earned grain a farmer had grown. Boaz slept at the threshing floor to guard his crop against the kind of attacks described in 1 Samuel 23:1 where the Philistines would sometimes loot the threshing floors of the Jews.
- **She came softly:** Ruth did just as her mother-in-law Naomi had recommended. She heard the advice, she said she would do it, and she did it. Ruth (whether she knows it or not) is exhibiting a certain amount of faith in the God of Israel. The lesson for us in this regard is that we should not allow fear to rule us but allow the spirit of God to lead us. The bible says, “And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul. Rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell” (Matthew 10:28). Also Philippians says, “I can do all things through God who strengthens me. Philippians 4:13

2. (Ruth 3:8-9) Ruth's request.

**“Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. And he said, “Who *are* you?” So she answered, “I *am* Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.”**

- **It happened at midnight that the man was startled:** This was an amazing scene. We can well imagine that Boaz was indeed **startled**, waking up in the night as he

turned in his sleep, knowing that someone was next to him, but not being able to see clearly because of the darkness and the sleep in his eyes.

1. Since Boaz had been there to protect against thieves, it must have given him quite a shock to wake up and know someone was there and it could well be thieves. But his shock quickly turned to wondering when he found out the visitor was a woman.



**Figure 3-1 Boaz Awakens to find Ruth at his feet**

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- **Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative:** Ruth identified herself and made a simple request. In beginning with the words “**take your maidservant,**” Ruth again showed great humility and submission. She presented herself as Boaz’s servant.
- **Under your wing:** Here, she boldly asked Boaz to take her in marriage. The phrase can also be translated as “**spread the corner of your garment over me.**” This was a culturally relevant way to say, “I am a widow, take me as your wife.”

1. In Ezekiel 16:8, God uses the same terminology in relation to Israel: *I spread my wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you and you became Mine, says the LORD God.*”

2. God was married to the nation of Israel, but they faltered and He divorced them (Ref. Hosea 1:9). However, God will remarry the nation of Israel and says, “Turn, O backsliding children, saith the LORD; for I am married unto you: and I will take you one of a city, and two of a family, and I will bring you to Zion” (Jeremiah 3:14). Let’s understand something about both Hosea’s and Jeremiah’s prophecies. Jeremiah’s prophecies concerned the Southern Kingdom of Judah and Hosea’s prophecy was mostly directed at the Northern Kingdom of Israel.

- **For you are a close relative:** This shows that this was not an inappropriate thing for Ruth to do towards Boaz. It was bold, but not inappropriate. Ruth understood this as she identified Boaz as her **close relative** (literally, *you are a goel*, a kinsman-redeemer).

1. Though deceased, Elimelech had the right to have his family name carried on and as *goel*, Boaz had the responsibility to do this for Elimelech. This could only happen through Boaz marrying Ruth,



and providing children to carry on the name of Elimelech. Ruth boldly, yet humbly and properly, sought her rights.

3. (Ruth 3:10-11) Boaz's response.

**“Then he said, “Blessed *are* you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* a virtuous woman.”**

- **Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! . . . you did not go after young men:** Apparently, there was a considerable age difference between Ruth and Boaz. It also seems that because of this, Boaz considered himself unattractive to Ruth and had therefore ruled out any idea of a romance between them.
  1. This shows something else wonderful about Boaz. He had the right to force himself upon Ruth as her *goel*, but he did not. He wasn't going to just say, “There's a woman I want, and I have her by right.” He was kind enough to **not** act as *goel* towards Ruth unless *she* desired it.
  2. It also shows something else wonderful about Ruth: She based her attraction to Boaz more on *respect* rather than on image or appearance. Tragically, many people fall in love with an image or an appearance, rather than with a person we can really respect. Our society has fallen in love with image; the motto on sports TV is “image is everything.” While image to a certain extent is important, one should look at the heart first and not be tempted by the fleshly desires of a person, be it money, looks or even a person's status in society. You find that many people become tempted at the thrill of either dating a thug that has a lot of money and that's all and after they find that they are no longer desired; thrown away like some old dish cloth leading to, pain, sadness

and a life that may be filled with bitterness. \*Man is generally tempted by three avenues in life:

**Lust of the Eyes:** A man or woman looks at a house they can't afford yet they buy it anyway because it is pleasing to look at. That is one of the reasons for the housing market crash around 2005; people bought more house than they could afford and the banks were at fault as well for they were obliging also.

**Lust of the Flesh:** A person feels that they can't do without being with another person so they go after others to satisfy their fleshly desires.

**Pride of Life:** Ego, Ego--Needing to prove yourself among others and the need to be honored by the world thereby satisfying your pride. The bible says, "Pride goeth before destruction and a haughty spirit before a fall." (Prov. 16:18).

- **I will do for you all that you request:** Boaz made Naomi look brilliant in her advice to Ruth. The plan worked perfectly. Why did it work that way? Because it was God's plan all along.
- **All the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman:** What does he mean when he says she is a virtuous woman? It means Boaz was attracted to Ruth because of her character. We don't really know how Ruth looked, but we do know that she was a woman of godly character and sought to adhere to a high moral standard.
  1. Literally, Boaz called Ruth a *hah-yil* woman. The basic meaning behind this Hebrew word is "moral strength, good quality, integrity, virtue." This same word is used in a term for heroes in the Bible: *A mighty man of valor*. Just as courage and strength make a man a hero, so Ruth's courage and strength, shown in her virtue - make her a hero. Another

woman in the bible that exhibited these endearing qualities is Queen Esther in the book of Esther. I suggest you also read my commentary on my website to find all the intricate details about her and how God used her to save a remnant of Israel. Go to: [oljchristianenterprises.com](http://oljchristianenterprises.com)

**4. (Ruth 3:12-13)** A potential problem: A nearer kinsman.

**“Now it is true that I *am* a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be *that* if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you; good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, *as* the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”**

- **There is a relative closer than I:** Apparently, though Boaz was a recognized *goel* towards Ruth, there was another *goel* closer in relation to her deceased father-in-law Elimelech. So, Boaz could not exercise his right as kinsman-redeemer unless this closer kinsman-redeemer relinquished his rights towards Ruth.
- **If he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you:** Wonderfully, Boaz wasn't willing to cut corners. He would do God's will God's way. He knew that if it was really of the LORD, then it could be done orderly and in a proper way. The God we serve said: “But all things should be done decently and in order.” (1st Cor. 14:40)

C. Ruth goes home.

**1. (Ruth 3:14-15)** Boaz sends Ruth home.

**“So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” Also he said, “Bring the shawl that is on you 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.”**





Figure 3-2 Boaz pours some wheat for Ruth

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- **Do not let it be known:** Boaz and Ruth were not trying to hide anything scandalous; it was just that Boaz didn't want this nearer kinsman to learn that Ruth was now demanding her right to marriage to a *goel* before Boaz could tell him personally.
- **He measured six measures of barley:** As a proper gentleman, Boaz did not send Ruth home empty-handed. Not having any cakes, he gave her six measures of grain.

Jewish traditions say that the six measures of barley given as a gift to Ruth were a sign of six pious (religious devotion) men who would descend from her, endowed with six spiritual gifts: David, Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, Azariah, and the Messiah.

1. David the greatest king of Israel
2. Daniel one of the greatest Old Testament Prophets
3. Hananiah, Mishael and Azariah: These were their Jewish names prior to the fall of the Southern Kingdom of Judah, but under Nebekenezzer they were called: to Hananiah Shadrach; Mishael Meshach and to Azariah Abed-Nego.
4. Jesus Christ: for Ruth and Boaz had a son named Obed who was the father of Jessie who was the father of King David.

**2. (Ruth 3:16-18)** Ruth tells her mother-in-law Naomi all that happened.

**“So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “*Is that you, my daughter?*” Then she told her all that the man had done for her. And she said, “*These six Measures of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’*” “ Then she said, “*Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.*”**

- **Sit still, my daughter . . . the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day:** This was a time of considerable anxiety for Ruth. She had claimed her right to marriage, and would be married. The only question was to *whom* would she be married. Would it be to Boaz, or to the nearer *goel*? The issue would be decided that very day.

## *Ruth Chapter 4*

A. The nearer kinsman declines his right of redemption.

1. (Ruth 4:1-2) Boaz meets the nearer kinsman at the city gates.

**“Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, “Come aside, friend, sit down here.” So he came aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.”**



Figure 4-1 Boaz talks with the near Kinsman Redeemer

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- **Now Boaz went:** The previous chapter left us at a dramatic point. Ruth and Boaz were obviously in love and wanted to get married, with Boaz exercising the right of the *goel* - the kinsman-redeemer. Yet, there was a kinsman closer to Ruth and he had priority. Would *he* claim the right of kinsman-redeemer towards Ruth, and keep her and Boaz from coming together?
- **Boaz went up to the gate:** The **gate** of the city was always the place where the esteemed and honorable men of the city sat. For an ancient city in Israel, it was a combination of a city council chamber and a courtroom.
  1. The city gate was “A kind of outdoor court, the place where judicial matters were resolved by the elders and those who had earned the confidence and respect of the people . . . a place for business and as a kind of forum or public meeting place.”
- **The near kinsman of who Boaz had spoken came by:** Boaz surprised Ruth in 3:12 by telling her there was a nearer kinsman than himself. Now this man came by the city gates as Boaz sat there. Since at this time as we indicated earlier, Bethlehem was a small village where everyone knew everybody else who lived there; that being said, Boaz probably talked to this kinsman on many occasions at the square area.
  1. Because Ruth had quietly gone back home after being at the threshing floor at Boaz’s instruction (Ruth 3:14), Boaz’s approach to this nearer kinsman was a complete surprise to the other man. Clearly this was a tactical advantage to Boaz.
  2. How about you and I, when we want something so bad in life do we pray asking God for our wants and needs or do we try and take matters into our own hands, not willing to wait for God? The bible says, “but they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint” (Isaiah 40:31).

- **Come aside, friend, sit down here:** When I read this I reflected on the old Star Trek series with Captain Kirk and for those of you who are Trekkies, (the original Star Trek), if you listen and looked closely those writers of the show were religious Christians. Now, without going too far off the reservation, what am I eluding to here? It was Jewish custom in the Old Testament to greet one another by Literally leaning slightly forward with the head erect and the body a little inclined forward by raising the hand to the heart, mouth and forehead. The symbolic meaning meant: “My heart, my voice, my brain are all at your service.” The Star Trek episode that I was referring to was called: “Errand of Mercy.” Now, the writer of Ruth never identified the name of the nearer kinsman, because he was not worthy of the honor due to his declination in fulfilling his obligations as the nearer kinsman to Ruth.

1. “Doubtless Boaz both knew his name, and called him by it; but it is omitted by the holy writer, partly because it was unnecessary to know it; and principally in way of contempt, as is usual, and a just punishment upon him, that he who would not preserve his brother’s name might lose his own.

**2. (Ruth 4:3-4)** Boaz asks the nearer kinsman to redeem the land of Naomi (and Elimelech).

**“Then he said to the close relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. And I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it* ;but if you will not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you.’ “ And he said, “I will redeem *it*.”**

- **Naomi . . . sold the piece of land:** The duty of the *goel* - the kinsman-redeemer - was more than the duty to preserve the family name of his brother in Israel. It was also to keep land allotted to members of the clan within the clan.
  1. When Israel came into the Promised Land during the days of Joshua, the land was divided among the tribes and then among the family groups. God intended that the land stay within those tribes and family groups, so the land could never permanently be sold. However, if it was sold, every fifty years, it had be returned to the original family group (Leviticus 25:8-17).
  2. But fifty years is a long time. So God made provision for land that was “sold,” that it might be redeemed back to the family by the kinsman-redeemer.
  3. Again, the kinsman-redeemer had the responsibility to protect the *persons*, *property*, and *posterity* of the larger family - and all of these duties went together.
- **The piece of land:** When Boaz brought the matter up to the nearer kinsman, he brought it up as a matter regarding *property* - something any man would be interested in. Anyone would want to buy back a piece of property and keep it in the family name by keeping it for one’s self.
- **If you will redeem it, redeem it:** When Boaz put it in terms of purely a land transaction, there was no hesitation on the nearer kinsman’s part. Of course he said, “**I will redeem it.**” Just as then as it is today, owning property is a sign of prosperity and shows that the who owns the land is a responsible person who can handle their business.

**3. (Ruth 4:5)** Boaz informs the nearer kinsman of his duty to redeem the *posterity* of Elimelech, if he will redeem the *property* of Elimelech.

**“Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”**

- **On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess:** Boaz then put the surprise on the nearer kinsman. He told him that he wasn't only dealing with Naomi and the property of Elimelech, he also had to deal with Ruth.
  1. Because Naomi was older and beyond the years of bearing children, the nearer kinsman was not expected to marry Naomi and raise up children to the family name of her deceased husband Elimelech. But Ruth was another matter - she *was* able to marry and bear children.
- **Buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance:** Boaz explained what everyone knew - that this was a package deal. If someone was going to exercise the right of kinsman-redeemer towards the deceased Elimelech, he had to fulfill the duty in regard to *both* the property and the posterity.
  1. Because of Boaz's wise (perhaps shrewd) way of framing the occasion, this was the first time the nearer kinsman considered this, and it was a pretty big question to take in all at once. When it was just a matter of property, it was easy to decide on; but if he must take Ruth as a wife, that was another matter.
  2. The matter of the nearer kinsman to accept both the land and Ruth is just like someone who dates a person, falls in love and then wants to marry the other. If one of them has children from a previously marriage or relationship, the other person must accept that child too.

**4. (Ruth 4:6)** The nearer kinsman declines his right of redemption towards the property and posterity of Elimelech.

**“And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*.”**

- **I cannot redeem it for myself:** Though it would be great to receive the property associated with Ruth, the nearer kinsman knew that taking her into his home and raising up her children would **ruin** his **own inheritance**.



- **Lest I ruin my own inheritance:** Probably, the man had grown sons that had already received their inheritance of lands. The problem of dividing that inheritance among future children he would have with Ruth was more than he wanted to deal with.
- **You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it:** These words probably made Boaz very happy for now he knows that he is free to marry the woman that he loves and also to satisfy what God had told all the Jews in regards to a *goel*, or kinsman redeemer situation.
  1. Some might have thought Boaz’s plan was foolish: to gain Ruth by offering her and her land to the nearer kinsman. How could that work? But the seemingly foolish plan did work. **Why did it work?** Because like all plans that God has in mind for man, they will always succeed for His will be done.

B. The ceremony to document the proceedings.

1. **(Ruth 4:7-8)** The custom of the sandal in transactions.

**“Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel. Therefore, the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” So he took off his sandal.”**

- **It was the custom in former times in Israel** Deut 25:9 says, “his brother's widow shall go up to him in the presence of the elders, take off one of his sandals, spit in his face and say, "This is what is done to the man who will not build up his brother's family line." But in this case, because there was no lack of honor involved, they just did the part of the ceremony involving the sandal.
- **Buy it for yourself:** The nearer kinsman said, “The land is yours to redeem, because you are also willing to redeem the posterity of Elimelech by taking Ruth as wife, something I am not willing to do.”

2. (Ruth 4:9-10) Boaz's announcement to the elders and the people.

**“And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that *was* Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day.”**

- **Boaz said to the elders and all the people:** Boaz joyfully proclaimed - legally sealing the transaction - that he would redeem both the property and the posterity of Elimelech, and (best of all!) take Ruth, the woman he loved, as his wife.

**1. That the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from the gate of this place** is a good description of the idea of preserving the posterity of the deceased.

- **Ruth . . . I have acquired as my wife:** Back in chapter one, Ruth seemed to be giving up on her best chance of marriage by leaving her native land of Moab and giving her heart and life to the God of Israel. But because Ruth put God first, He brought her together in a relationship greater than she could have imagined. Today, God will bless those wanting to get married in the same way if they will only put Him first. Even though the sanctity of marriage is currently threatened by the world, a person wanting to enter into a marital relationship with another person must be willing to live by biblical principles in regards to the order of how God has set up the marriage between a man and a woman as outlined in Ephesians 4 and 5.

**1. In your estimation why does the world have such a hard time living by the standards that God has set forth for marriage?** Because man has been told by the world how marriage should be run catering to what man thinks is best instead of listening to God. No wonder 50% of marriages today end in divorce. That was not the case prior to 1968 when a woman's movement occurred that involved burning bras as a sign of independence from men. God did not mean for women and men to be independent of each other; He wanted their union to symbolize a oneness both in the

marriage and in worshipping Him. Now the world has chosen to change God's standards regarding marriage because man now thinks he knows what's best for him because he is smarter than God. **In your estimation, who runs this world?** Satan who has blinded the eyes of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God" (2 Cor. 4:4).

- **You are witnesses this day:** This explains why a marriage ceremony is important, and why it should be recognized by the civil authorities. Boaz had a love for Ruth that was public, a love that wanted to be publicly witnessed and registered.
  1. Sometimes, people wonder why a marriage ceremony or a marriage license is important. "Can't we just be married before God?" But there is something severely lacking in a loving relationship that doesn't want to proclaim itself; that does not want witnesses; and that does not want the bond to be recognized by the civil authorities. That love falls short of true marital love. Moreover, a problem that currently exists in the world is that more and more people are opting out of marriage and choosing to live together. A relationship like that lacks trust and commitment and is more apt to not work verses a loving and committed relationship that honors God by getting married.
  2. Additionally, the problem with marriage today is that both women and men no longer want to play their roles in the marriage as outlined by God. For instance God says, "But I want you to realize that the head of every man is Christ, and the head of the woman is man, and the head of Christ is God." 1st Cor. 11:3. Fellas, God said to you: "Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" Ephesians 5:25. Let me ask another question; **why does a woman give up her name when she gets married?** It is a sign of submissiveness; just as Ruth submitted to Boaz and was pleasing to God, so should the women of today who endeavor to get married. Don't let the world tell you how the marriage should be run i.e. all the books published telling you how to have a happy

marriage, but read what God says about having and maintaining a blissful relationship with one another.

3. Now, what about those who say “Well, if we were on a desert island and no one was there to marry us, could we still be married before God?” need to hear the answer: “Yes - on a desert island. But you aren’t on a desert island. There are witnesses and civil authorities for you to proclaim your commitment of marital love too. God wants you to do that!”

**3. (Ruth 4:11-12)** The blessing of the witnesses to the wedding.

**“And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, “*We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman.*”**

- **All the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, “We are witnesses”:** No doubt, the crowd cheered! The men thought Ruth was beautiful and the women thought Boaz was handsome. Everybody could see what a romantic, loving occasion this was.
- **Like Rachel and Leah:** These two had **thirteen children** between them, and were the “mothers” of the whole nation of Israel. This was a big blessing to put on Boaz and Ruth. An interesting question for you is this: **if Israel was composed of 12 tribes represented by all of the house of Jacob, who was the 13<sup>th</sup> child? Dina**
- **Like the house of Perez:** What was so special about Perez? The story of his birth is in Genesis 38:27-30. He was the ancestor of the Beth-lehem people, and his family one of the five from which the tribe of Judah sprang.

C. Happily ever after.

**1. (Ruth 4:13)** Ruth and Boaz have their first child.

**“So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.”**



Figure 4-2, Boaz and Ruth have Obed their firstborn Son  
<https://www.google.com/search?q=free+domain+picture+boaz+marries+Ruth>

- **The LORD gave her conception:** The gift of children was never taken for granted in Israel. The fact that Boaz and Ruth were able to raise up a son to the deceased Elimelech was evidence of God’s blessing.

**2. (Ruth 4:14-16)** The blessed life of Naomi.

**“Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.” Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him.”**

- **Blessed be the LORD:** Look at blessed Naomi! She now had a grandson; she was now **famous in Israel**; and she got to be a nurse to her own grandson.
- **Who has not left you this day without a close relative:** It was fitting that these blessings in the life of Naomi be given so much attention at the end of the book. Naomi was the one whose original return to the LORD began all this great work of God. If Naomi had not decided to go back to Bethlehem, the land of Israel, and the God of Israel, none of this would have happened.

1. This is a marvelous demonstration of what God can do through one poor woman who gets right with Him. May I propose another question for you? **The poor woman who lives in the barrio or the Ghetto who believes in Jesus as her Savior and the Pope of Rome also believes in Christ, which one of these is more esteemed by God?** Neither because God said: “For the LORD your God is God of gods and Lord of lords, the great God, mighty and awesome, who shows no partiality and accepts no bribes” Deut 10:17; let’s cross-reference that with Romans 2:11: “For God does not show favoritism.” However, the world would have said the Pope. Why? Because many in the Christian community don’t read their bibles to know what God says depending exclusively on the Priest, the Pastor, the Ministers of God to tell them what it says. We as Christians must read our

bible for 2d Timothy 2:15 says, “study to show thyself approved; a workman unto God; that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.” Why should we study our bibles? So that the world cannot lead us astray.

2. It is also fitting that Naomi was the one who said in chapter one, *the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me . . . the LORD has brought me home again empty . . . the LORD has testified against me (Ruth 1:20-21)*. If only Naomi could have seen *then* how greatly the LORD would bless her at the end! That’s why patience is a virtue in the Christian believer’s life for we must wait upon the Lord because He is never late; He’s always right on time.
3. We can’t blame Naomi - we certainly might do the same kind of thing. But we should also learn from what she learned. We should learn that God’s plan is perfect and filled with love, and even when we can’t figure out what He is doing and it all seems so desperate, He still knows what He is doing. We should learn that *all things work together for good for those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose (Romans 8:28)*.

**3. (Ruth 4:17-22)** Ruth and Boaz: Great-grandparents to David, king of Israel.

**“ Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. 18 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.” It should be noted that Salmon married Rehab the harlot. She also is in the Messianic line of Jesus.**

- **There is a son born to Naomi:** The son of Ruth and Boaz was named **Obed**. He had a son name **Jesse** who had a son named **David**. And David had a descendant named *Jesus* of whose kingdom He will inherit in posterity!

1. “God’s hand is all over history. God works out His purpose, generation after generation. Limited as we are to one lifetime, each of us sees so

little of what happens in the grand scheme of things. A genealogy is a striking way of bringing before us the continuity of God's purpose through the ages. The process of history is not haphazard. There is a purpose in it all. And the purpose is the purpose of God with its finality occurring at the return of Jesus Christ who will set all things right.

History is really His Story!

- **The father of David:** Naomi's return to Bethlehem, and the roots of David in Bethlehem, going back to Ruth and Boaz, are one of the reasons why Joseph and Mary had to go to Bethlehem to register in the census of Caesar Augustus (Luke 2:1-5). Ruth and Boaz are the reason why Jesus was born in Bethlehem!

1. But the consideration of Jesus in this book of Ruth doesn't begin with the mention of King David; Jesus has been through the whole book, pictured by Boaz and the office of the kinsman-redeemer.

- The kinsman-redeemer had to be a family member; Jesus added humanity to His eternal deity so He could be our kinsman and save us.

- The kinsman-redeemer had the duty of buying family members out of slavery; Jesus redeemed us from slavery to sin and death.

- The kinsman-redeemer had the duty of buying back land that had been forfeited; Jesus will redeem the earth that mankind "sold" over to Satan called the world.

- Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, was not motivated by self-interest, but motivated by love for Ruth. Jesus' motivation for redeeming us is His great love for us.

- Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, had to have a plan to redeem Ruth unto himself - and some might have thought the plan to be foolish. Jesus has a plan to redeem us, and some



might think the plan foolish (saving men by dying for them on a cruel cross?), yet the plan works and is glorious.

- Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, took her as his bride; the people Jesus has redeemed are collectively called His bride encompassing the Church; Ephesians 5:31-32; Revelation 21:9.

- Boaz, as kinsman-redeemer to Ruth, provided a glorious destiny for Ruth. Jesus, as our redeemer, provides a glorious destiny for us for He has prepared a place for us in His heavenly kingdom.

Closing: But it all comes back to the idea of Jesus as our *kinsman-redeemer*; this is why He became a man. God might have sent an angel to save us, but the angel would not have been our *kinsman*. Jesus, in His eternal glory, without the addition of humanity to His divine nature might have saved us, but He would not have been our *kinsman*. A great prophet or priest would be our kinsman, but his own sin would have disqualified him as our *redeemer*. Only Jesus, the eternal God who added humanity to His eternal deity, can be both the *kinsman* and the *redeemer* for mankind for the man who knew no sin became sin for us that we might be righteous in the eyes of God (Ref. 2 Cor. 5:21).