

## Ruth — Chapter One

**Ruth 1:1-5 "Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband."**

"And it came to pass in the days when the judges judged, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. And Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelt there about ten years. And Mahlon and Chilion died both of them; and the woman was left of her two children and of her husband." (ASV)

The time in which the events of this book take place is given in verse one: in the time of the judges. One is not told which judges, but notice the circumstance which caused Elimelech to move: a famine in the land. This fits perfectly with what one knows from the book of Judges, where the conquests by various groups often resulted in a famine of food for the Israelites, i.e., Gideon, et cetera.

A certain man (Elimelech) took his wife and two sons to the land of Moab. The obvious implication is that he did this to escape the famine. But in this land, Elimelech soon lost his life. Then the two sons married Moabite women. Some have stated that this broke the law the Israelites had been given with regards to marrying people in the land of Canaan. I reject that notion.

**"Observe thou that which I command thee this day: behold, I drive out before thee the Amorite, and the Canaanite, and the Hittite, and the Perizzite, and the Hivite, and the Jebusite. Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous GOD: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods" (Exodus 34:11-16).**

It should be noted that the prohibition was against **"the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest."** From our earlier studies, we learn that the land where Elimelech's family was going was not on the east side of Jordan but on the west side of Jordan. (Moses was not allowed to enter the promised land because of his sin, but he was allowed to go into the land of the Moabites.) Mahlon married Ruth (4:10), and Chilion married Orpah. But before they had any children, the men both died, leaving Ruth and Orpah with

no one to support them. This was a very difficult situation for a woman in those days and often reduced her to a position of extreme poverty.

It has often been said that GOD's purpose in having the Israelites marry within themselves was to keep the purity of the bloodline intact for the Savior. This thought needs to be examined. This was not a racial mandate on the part of GOD. If it was then GOD broke His own rule by bringing Rahab and Ruth into the bloodline. There is nothing racial in the above mandate (Ex. 34:11-16). As Motyer points out: *"The only kind of discrimination which we find in the Old Testament is cultural and religious"* (Motyer, p. 67). Why did GOD tell the Israelites to discriminate as to whom they married? So that those they married did not lead them away from the true worship of GOD to worship idols. The restriction was not racial, it was cultural and religious.

One should observe the obvious tragedy in the life of Naomi. First, her husband dies, yet, there is still hope for Naomi because she has two sons to care for her and continue the bloodline of inheritance. But then both of her sons die without having children. There is no one left to inherit their property rights. Further, how will this effect her relationship with GOD? Too many times people blame GOD when tragedy enters their lives. Will Naomi turn away from GOD?

Who were the Moabites? When one looks at Genesis chapter nineteen he learns that they were descendants of Lot through his incestuous relations with his daughters. They worshipped Chemosh which sometimes involved human sacrifice.

Ruth 1:6-10 **"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 how that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. Wherefore she went forth out of the**

**place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people."**

"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 how that Jehovah had visited His people in giving them bread. And she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each of you to her mother's house: Jehovah deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. Jehovah grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voice, and wept. And they said unto her, Nay, but we will return with thee unto thy people." (ASV)

Naomi arose to go back to Judah because she had heard that the Lord had blessed His people. Notice that she attributed the end of the famine to GOD'S blessings. She does not think in terms of natural law, but she knows that GOD has provided the blessings.

*"We believe that God is there, God cares, God rules and God provides"* (J.A. Motyer, p.43).

Her daughters-in-law went with her. This may have been the custom of that time, and the young women would have gone with her to the border of Moab. Coffman and others assert that this was an oriental custom of the time. If such was the case, then verse eight was probably spoken when they reached the border.

Notice the prayer, or wishes, Naomi had

for her daughters-in-law. First, she wanted the Lord to deal kindly with them. She wanted the very best for these two women, the underlying reason being the good way they had treated her sons and herself. It is obvious there had been a very good relationship between this mother and her daughters-in-law. Good relationships should always be cultivated, and one ought to try to have good relationships with his in-laws as well as with all others. Second, she wished that they might have rest in the house of their husbands. She was wishing they might find husbands and thus rest. This is interesting from the standpoint of the lot of widows in that time. They were often destitute having no one to care and provide for them. She wished they would have a husband to care for them.

They all lifted their voices in weeping. They cared deeply for each other and did not really want this parting to take place. This was evidenced by their desire to go with her to her people.

**Ruth 1:11-14 "And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons; Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her."**

"And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should even have a husband to-night, and should also bear sons; would ye

therefore tarry till they were grown? would ye therefore stay from having husbands? nay, my daughters, for it grieveth me much for your sakes, for the hand of Jehovah is gone forth against me. And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clave unto her." (ASV)

Naomi told them there was no hope of their obtaining a husband by her. She had no more sons, and she was too old to have a husband. Even if she did marry and have more sons, Ruth and Orpah would not wait for them to grow up.

She further told them how it grieved her that they were suffering because the Lord's hand was against her. This reminds one of Job who thought GOD was doing all of the bad things to him. There is no indication here that her husband and sons were killed by GOD; this is simply the way many believe when bad things happen to them.

Notice the tears of sadness in the text. This life brings many times of sadness to mankind. The death of a loved one, the sadness occasioned by those who forsake GOD. The list of things which cause sadness and heartache is indeed a lengthy one. Is it a wonder then that heaven is described as a place where there are no more tears (Rev. 21:4)? What a comforting hope for the future this brings man.

They lifted up their voices with more weeping, and finally Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and returns to her people. The oriental custom was to kiss upon meeting and leaving. But Ruth does not kiss Naomi, instead she cleaves to her; she will not leave her. Ruth was determined to follow Naomi wherever she went, as the next few verses will show.

**Ruth 1:15-18 "And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will**

**lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy GOD my GOD: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her."**

"And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her god: return thou after thy sister-in-law. And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, and to return from following after thee, for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy GOD my GOD; where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: Jehovah do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me. And when she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, she left off speaking unto her." (ASV)

Naomi told Ruth that her sister-in-law had returned to her blood relatives and to her god (probably Chemosh). It should be remembered that Naomi had just described her pitiful condition to these two women. Orpah's decision seemed to be that she would be better off by returning home and taking her chances in finding a husband there. Motyer believes Orpah showed love toward Naomi by obeying her command to go back to her homeland and people (p. 49). By mentioning "**her god**," the indication is that, though she had been introduced to GOD and had seen the godliness of Naomi and her family, she was not inclined to follow Him. The contrast to Ruth is clearly made and shows one that the same influence does not always have the same result.

Naomi urged Ruth to follow the example of her sister-in-law. This may very well have been a test, but if it was, Ruth passed with flying colors. Knowing the destitute state of Naomi and the hopelessness of obtaining a husband from her, she said, "I will follow you anywhere you go." Wherever Naomi lodged, whether it be in the streets, a humble shack, or a palace, Ruth said she would abide with her. She would not abandon Naomi in her hour of need. From what we learn later, it

may be that Naomi was feeble at this time and would have had trouble taking care of herself, for she sent Ruth into the fields to glean for both of them. With her spirit, this writer would not perceive Naomi to have relied on her daughter-in-law for sustenance unless she were unable to help.

Ruth further said that Naomi's people would be her people. She was willing to leave her blood relatives and nation, in order to be a part of Naomi's people. How many over the years have been willing to be missionaries in foreign lands, or even across the country, but have been hindered by wives who were unwilling to leave family behind? The ties of family are strong, but Jesus says,

**"He that loveth father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me"** (Matthew 10:37).

Ruth reminds one of another who left his homeland, but not necessarily his family, and that is Abraham.

**"By faith Abraham, when he was called to go out into a place which he should after receive for an inheritance, obeyed; and he went out, not knowing whither he went. By faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: For he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD"** (Hebrews 11:8-10).

How many have seen the true light over the years but have refused to leave the land of sin behind them? Orpah chose to stay in the land of sin, while Ruth chose freedom with GOD's people.

Ruth next said, "**Thy GOD my GOD.**" She had come to know the GOD of heaven through the teaching and example of godly Naomi, and she was determined to serve Him.

Like Abraham of old, she **"looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is GOD"** (Hebrews 11:10). Ruth's care for Naomi was further stated when she declared that where Naomi died, she would die. Ruth would be with Naomi until the end, only death would separate them. She then sealed her words with an oath: **"the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me."**

Upon her strong declarations, Naomi took Ruth home with her. She stopped trying to persuade her to return to Moab. What a blessing Ruth and Naomi were to each other, as they helped each other to be faithful. What a blessing they received from GOD for their faithfulness.

**Ruth 1:19-22 "So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest."**

"So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and the women said, Is this Naomi? And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara; for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and Jehovah hath brought me home again empty; why call ye me Naomi, seeing Jehovah hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, who returned out of the country of Moab: and

they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest." (ASV)

Naomi and Ruth determined to go to Naomi's homeland (Bethlehem) and they did what they determined to do. Many do not follow through with their plans. Over the years I have heard many say they intended to serve the Lord by coming back to Him, but they never did. To their credit, Naomi and Ruth worked their plan. When they got to Bethlehem, the city turned out to meet them. This obviously showed that Naomi was well-known and (some believe) thought of highly. But the ten years she was away changed her, and the people were surprised at just how much change was evident.

She told them not to call her Naomi, which means *"sweet or sweetness,"* but rather she should be called Mara, which means *"bitter or bitterness."* This seemed to be her commentary on the way things had gone for her over the years, for she immediately pointed out the difference of then and now. When she left Bethlehem, she had had a husband and two sons, but she returned in poverty with only a daughter-in-law. Like Job, she believed GOD was the cause of her present situation. Unlike Job, she attributed her distress to GOD'S punishment for her sins (**"testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me"**). Why did Naomi feel that it was GOD who was **"testifying against her?"** Could she have felt guilty because she had left Israel, left GOD's people behind to go live among the heathens?

When did Naomi get back to her own country? It was the time of barley harvest. Coffman thinks this was around the end of April. Clarke tells us:

*"This was in the beginning of the spring, for the barley harvest began immediately after the Passover, and that feast was held on the 15th of the month Nisan, which corresponds nearly with our March"* (Clarke, Vol. 2, p. 194)

## Ruth — Chapter Two

**Ruth 2:1-7 "And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech. And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house."**

"And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech, and his name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. And she went, and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on the portion of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, Jehovah be with you. And they answered him, Jehovah bless thee. Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: And she said, Let me glean, I pray you, and gather after the reapers among the

sheaves. So she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, save that she tarried a little in the house." (ASV)

Verse one tells about the kinship of Boaz to Elimelech, but this does not imply that Naomi sent Ruth to his field. In fact, there is no indication that Naomi told Ruth anything about Boaz until later in the text (v. 20). This information is given for the reader's benefit so that he might see the providence of GOD in this matter. Everything about this book shows the hand of GOD working in the affairs of men. Remember that GOD was all along preparing a lineage for the Messiah, and Ruth was obviously chosen by GOD for this purpose, though it is not stated in exact words. The name Boaz means "*called*" (margin of my Bible), "*strength is in him*" (Barnes, p. 474), and "*In him is strength*" or "*strength or fleetness*" (Coffman, p. 346). Some believe this may have been the prophet Ibsan, but as Coffman stated, this does not seem trustworthy (Coffman, p. 346).

Ruth proposed that she should go into the fields to glean whatever she might, in the field of whoever might let her. This gleaning was the picking up of whatever was dropped by the reapers. GOD had decreed this gleaning as a way of providing for the poor.

**"And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your GOD"** (Leviticus 19:9-10; see also Leviticus 23:22).

Deuteronomy 24:19 adds that if they left a sheaf in the field, they were not allowed to go back and get it. Now notice that GOD made provision for the poor, but GOD did not just hand it to them. They had to go out and work for it. Considering that, one sees that Ruth

was not too proud to do manual labor and get her hands dirty in order to eat. One also sees she was a good worker, as was testified in verse seven. Nobody had to prod her to work (v. 2). This is the kind of worker needed in the church.

Notice that to her way of thinking, she just happened (by chance) to land in the field of Boaz ("**hap**" — "*happened*"). Again, the whole book shows this was not just happenstance; it was the providence of GOD.

In verse four, Boaz came to inspect the work and greet his workers with a blessing: "**The Lord be with thee.**" Thus, he showed his good will toward the workers. Notice they also wished the Lord's blessings upon him. This is quite different from the present time where people have been taught by the unions and other organizations to distrust management and vice-versa. What many need to remember is that prosperity is a two-edged sword.

*"The world could not move along as it ought without the labor of man. Neither could it accomplish what it should were it not for those who are financially able to support the 'man with the hoe'"* (Zerr, p. 379).

In verse five, Boaz became aware that Ruth was in his fields. Notice the question he asked his overseer: "**Whose damsel is this?**" He did not ask who she was but to whom she belonged. It seems he may have been attracted to her from the very start.

The overseer told Boaz she was that Moabitess who came with Naomi from the land of Moab. By now the story had probably quickly spread, even though some would not know her by face. He next told Boaz how she had asked to be allowed to glean in this field and even go among the sheaves after the reapers had passed them. He also told Boaz that she was a good worker, having been there since morning to the present time with only a little rest break in the "house." The house was like a shed or booth where they

ate and rested from the hot sun (Barnes, p. 475). Zerr tells us:

*"the inquiry or request made by the damsel that she be permitted to glean not only near the reapers but even among the sheaves was also an unusual thing. Permission to do this would indicate much confidence in the honesty of the gleaner"* (Zerr, p. 379).

**Ruth 2:8-13 "Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD GOD of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust. Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens."**

"Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither pass from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens. Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst,

go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found favor in thy sight, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a foreigner? And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother-in-law since the death of thy husband; and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people that thou knewest not heretofore. Jehovah recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of Jehovah, the GOD of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to take refuge. Then she said, Let me find favor in thy sight, my lord, for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken kindly unto thy handmaid, though I be not as one of thy handmaidens." (ASV)

The reading of verse eight is far clearer in the NKJV. In these verses, Boaz showed consideration for Ruth and gave her certain advantages she was not due (mercy). Again, it is believed that what he did in these verses (and in those to follow) showed his personal interest in Ruth. In these verses, the advantage she had in not going to another's field let her know she had a regular place to glean during the harvest. It is always comforting to know that one has a steady job. Second, he told her to stay close to his maidens. These were probably the women who gathered the barley and made sheaves out of it for the gatherers. This gave her an advantage over those who gleaned behind her. Third, he charged his young men, probably the reapers, not to touch her. Boaz thus extended his hand of protection over her, and this was important to someone who was a stranger. No one would thus attempt to take advantage of her in any way. Fourth, she did not have to find water and draw her own. She was allowed to drink the water which the young men provided for the workers.

Verse ten shows Ruth's reaction to Boaz's kindness. She prostrated herself on the ground, which was an act of humility from an inferior to a superior. She also asked him why

she received these favors from him. She reasoned that she was a stranger, or as one might say, a foreigner.

Boaz answered that it was because of the way she had treated her mother-in-law and because she left all, even family, behind to take care of her. This required faith on Ruth's part. (Abraham had the same faith which caused him to leave his homeland, family, and friends behind.) Boaz then stated that the Lord would compensate her for her labors, and she would be fully rewarded for her actions. Little did he know the full impact of the prophecy he had just made. But notice also that he spoke of her coming under the wings of the GOD she had come to trust. This seems to indicate she had chosen to come with Naomi because of the GOD she served. In other words, she had been converted to Judaism. The imagery here is beautiful, as it portrays the chicks who run under the wings of their mother when danger threatens. Ruth had chosen to accept the GOD of heaven who would protect her.

**"How excellent is Thy lovingkindness, O GOD! therefore the children of men put their trust under the shadow of Thy wings"** (Psalm 36:7).

**"Be merciful unto me, O GOD, be merciful unto me: for my soul trusteth in Thee: yea, in the shadow of Thy wings will I make my refuge, until these calamities be overpast"** (Psalm 57:1).

**"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, He is my refuge and my fortress: my GOD; in Him will I trust. Surely He shall deliver thee from the snare of the fowler, and from the noisome pestilence. He shall cover thee with His**

**feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust: His truth shall be thy shield and buckler. Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; nor for the arrow that flieth by day; Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; nor for the destruction that wasteth at noonday. A thousand shall fall at thy side, and ten thousand at thy right hand; but it shall not come nigh thee. Only with thine eyes shalt thou behold and see the reward of the wicked”** (Psalm 91:1-8).

Ruth humbly acknowledged her gratitude for all Boaz had done for her.

**Ruth 2:14-16 "And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not."**

"And at meal-time Boaz said unto her, Come hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers, and they reached her parched grain, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left thereof. And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not. And also pull out some for her from the bundles, and leave it, and let her glean, and rebuke her not." (ASV)

Here one sees more of Boaz's care for Ruth. He invited her to eat with him. The vinegar here *"seems to have been some kind of refreshing acid sauce used by the reapers to dip their bread in, which both cooled and refreshed them"* (Clarke, p. 197). They also handed her parched grain, which was a staple

of that time. The text tells one she had all she could eat and even had some left over which she was allowed to save. From the context, it is known she took this to Naomi (v. 18).

After Ruth left the "table" to go back to work, Boaz gave his reapers further instructions which would benefit her. He told them to let her glean among the sheaves and also to purposely let some of the grain fall in her path so she could gather more. They were told not to rebuke her for this. It is not certain whether these instructions were heard by Ruth or not. This writer believes she probably did not hear them. It is very obvious he intended to care for her and Naomi.

What a noble spirit Boaz had, even if love had entered the picture. The law said Boaz only had to leave the corners and what his reapers missed. True kindness and mercy go beyond the law. In GOD's law, minimums are a starting point of obligations, not an end within themselves. This was one of the problems with the Pharisees whom Jesus condemned. It is a legalistic attitude which says to stop at the minimum requirement.

**Ruth 2:17-23 "So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city: and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth, and gave to her that she had reserved after she was sufficed. And her mother in law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to day? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, He**

**said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother in law."**

"So she gleaned in the field until even; and she beat out that which she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. And she took it up, and went into the city; and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned: and she brought forth and gave to her that which she had left after she was sufficed. And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned to-day? and where hast thou wrought? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to-day is Boaz. And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of Jehovah, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is nigh of kin unto us, one of our near kinsmen. And Ruth the Moabitess said, Yea, he said unto me, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, and that they meet thee not in any other field. So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz, to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law." (ASV)

After beating out what she had gleaned, Ruth found she had an ephah of barley. Coffman says the scholars believe this to have been anywhere between four and seven gallons (Coffman, p. 352). Clarke says it was no less than seven and a half gallons (Clarke, p. 197). Motyer states it was about five gallons (Motyer, p. 80). From Exodus 16:16, one learns the amount of food for the average person was an omer per day, which means Ruth gathered enough food to feed her and Naomi for five days (Clarke, p. 476; and Coffman, p. 352). A good day's work indeed.

After beating the grain out, Ruth gathered it up and took it to Naomi. But notice she also brought her the food she had left over from the meal provided by Boaz. No doubt Naomi's questions were asked because of the abundance brought back by Ruth, as well as from natural curiosity. Ruth innocently told her the man's field she had worked in belonged to Boaz. From what followed, it is obvious Ruth had no idea who this man was, or the relationship which he sustained to Naomi. In her mind, she had simply gone out to work and had ended up in his fields.

In verse twenty, Naomi attributed this turn of events to the Lord. She thanked Him for the kindness which was shown to them. Motyer says the word "**kindness**" "*is the warmth of loyal love combined with brotherly comradeship and a sense of committed and reliable faithfulness*" (p. 80). Truly this is the kindness one would expect from a loving GOD toward His faithful people. Remember that she had called herself "**bitter**" and thought the Lord had punished her. But here she recognized His blessings, which meant she was wrong in her earlier assessment. Man is the agent by which GOD often shows His mercy and tenderness toward the poor. But in doing so, GOD does not override the nature of man to accomplish His will. Instead, GOD uses the man who has the right attitude, the right nature. Through GOD's providence Ruth ended up in the field of Boaz and not the near kinsman who would not take on the responsibility of taking care of her and Naomi. One of them had a selfish nature, and the other had one of kindness and pity.

Naomi next told Ruth that Boaz was a near kinsman, which means he had the right to redeem them.

*"The word here is GOEL, the redeemer, who had the right (1) of redeeming the inheritance of the person; (2) of marrying the widow; (3) of avenging the death. (See. Lev. 25:25-31, 47-55; Deut. 25:5-10; 19:1-*

13.) *As these rights belonged to the next of kin, GOEL came to mean the nearest kinsman*" (Barnes, p. 476).

Ruth informed Naomi that Boaz had told her to stay with his fields and his workers throughout the harvest. The term "**young men**" in verse twenty-one simply means servants in the original, and it refers to both sexes. Naomi then told Ruth she needed to heed this advice and not be seen in another's field.

*In verse twenty-two, "The word 'meet' is often, though not necessarily, used of hostile encounters, and perhaps here implies the dangers run by an unprotected foreigner. The danger, of course, would be much more acute in the case of an unprotected foreign woman, especially a young and attractive one" (Coffman, p. 353).*

Verse twenty-three shows one that Ruth heeded the council of both Boaz and Naomi, staying with the harvesters in Boaz's fields through not only the barley harvest but the wheat harvest as well.

*"This chapter ends, as did Ruth 1, with reference to the harvest. But there the tone was one of sadness, bitterness, aloneness and poverty. Now the situation is one of hope, of comfort and provision" (Motyer, p. 84).*

## **Ruth — Chapter Three**

**Ruth 3:1-5 "Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. Wash thy self therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that**

**thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do."**

*"And Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? And now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to-night in the threshing-floor. Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the threshing-floor, but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. And she said unto her, All that thou sayest I will do." (ASV)*

The stage was set for Ruth to obtain a husband. When Naomi said, "**My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee?**" she was saying she was going to try to provide her with a husband. It was the responsibility of parents to arrange marriages for their children. As seen in chapter one, she had prayed that both her daughters-in-law would be able to find husbands, but she was too old to bare them one. The NKJV says, "*shall I not seek security for you?*" — the security a woman would have in that time through marriage.

In verse two, Naomi began to unfold her plan to obtain a husband for Ruth. She revealed that Boaz was their kinsman. Under the laws of the Israelites, the near kinsmen was the redeemer. He could redeem the property of a deceased relative and take the man's wife as his wife. In fact, he had the responsibility of doing both if possible. Question: Did Naomi know at this time that there was a kinsman nearer than Boaz? If she knew Boaz was a kinsman, how could she not know of one who was nearer? Yet, one will see, the nearest kinsman apparently did not know his position in this affair.

Naomi told Ruth that Boaz would be winnowing, or threshing, the grain that night. Notice that Boaz helped in preparing the grain for use and storage. This was done in the evening, because usually there was a breeze from the sea at that time. The grain was generally thrown into the air. The breeze did the rest of the work, (blowing the husk away), and the heavier grain fell back to the earth. After accomplishing this work there was usually a time of fellowship while food was consumed by the hungry and tired workers. It should be pointed out that Boaz seemed to be helping in the work, not simply observing or overseeing it. His willingness to work beside his servants is possibly one of the reasons why they felt so good toward him (Ruth 2:4).

Naomi instructed Ruth to prepare herself to go to the threshing floor. Notice her instructions. Ruth was told to clean up and put on perfume ("**anoint**"). Then she was to put on her best clothes. Strong says this "**raiment**" was a dress meant to emphasize what was underneath it (if so, this was not in an immodest manner). In other words, she was to make herself as attractive to Boaz as she could. It should be noticed that she was not to bother Boaz until some time after he had eaten.

Ruth was then to watch where Boaz reposed for the night and then go to him and "**uncover his feet.**" It may be that Naomi did not realize that Boaz was not the "nearest kinsman" in their family. What she instructed Ruth to do was to claim her right of intimacy as the wife of the near kinsman (Zerr, p. 382). That this was the purpose is clearly seen in verse nine, where she made her wishes known. It is also obvious that she had complete trust in the righteousness of Boaz — he would do what was right. One sees she was justified in her trust in him.

*"It is said that women in the East, when going to the bed of their lawful husbands, through modesty, and in token of subjection, go to the bed's*

*foot, and gently raising the clothes, creep under them up to their place"* (Clarke, p. 198).

Ruth agreed to do everything which Naomi told her to do.

**Ruth 3:6-13 "And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning."**

"And she went down unto the threshing-floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her. And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself; and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am

Ruth thy handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thy handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman. And he said, Blessed be thou of Jehovah, my daughter: thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou sayest; for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a worthy woman. And now it is true that I am a near kinsman; howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as Jehovah liveth: lie down until the morning." (ASV)

One is told that Boaz ate and drank and that his heart was merry. Some have tried to portray this as meaning he was drunk — intoxicated. By studying the context, one can easily see this was not true, for when proper decisions needed to be made, and sin avoided, he was easily able to control himself. Such would not be the case if one was intoxicated. One might also notice that this phrase of being merry after eating and drinking is easily seen to be contentment in Judges 19:6-9 and First Kings 21:7. After Boaz had eaten, he was ready for rest after a long day of work. Boaz went to sleep, at which point, Ruth quietly ("softly") came to where he slept, uncovered his feet, and lay down at his feet. This should be seen as an act of humility and submission. Ruth humbly accepted the advice of Naomi and the law which GOD had given in order to perpetuate an inheritance. This shows her faith not only in Naomi but also in the GOD of heaven.

At mid-night Boaz awoke. It is not known what woke him, but whatever it was, it startled him ("afraid" — NKJV). As he turned himself, probably to look around, he saw a woman lying at his feet. This was in the night, and identification would be difficult, if not impossible, by mere sight. He asked who she was. She told him her name was Ruth and

then said, "**spread therefore thy skirt over thy handmaid.**" The word "**skirt,**" in the Hebrew (KANAP), is "*wing.*" Jewish scholars say it comes from the idea of a bird which spreads its wings over its young to protect them. But there is more to this than just asking for protection. She was actually asking him to take her as his wife. The Targum (A Jewish explanation of the Bible) says this means:

*"Let thy name be called on thy handmaid to take me for wife, because thou art the redeemer" (Clarke, p. 199). Clarke further tells us, "Even to the present day, when a Jew marries a woman, he throws the skirt or end of his talith over her, to signify that he has taken her under his protection" (Clarke, p. 199).*

In considering this, one might look back at chapter two, verse twelve. Also consider Ezekiel 16:8, where GOD spoke to His people saying:

**"Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread My skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest Mine."**

Notice also that Ruth's motive for asking him to marry her was because he was a near kinsman. The important thing was that she was trying to obey the laws of GOD. This was evidenced further by Boaz's words in verse ten. Boaz said she could have followed young men, or in essence, sought a husband from among them. This implies he was old, and at least one tradition says he was around eighty at this time. Second, it implies she was more interested in bringing up seed to her dead husband as specified by the law. Thus, Ruth showed her piety by seeking to marry the kinsman.

Verses eleven through thirteen show one

the willingness of Boaz to take her as his wife, but he could not just yet. From what one gathers in this context, if he had been the nearest kinsman, he could have taken her that night as his wife, but he was an honorable man — he was a gentleman. Boaz did not take advantage of the situation to fulfill mere physical desires. He honestly told her there was another who was nearer, but if that man did not want to fulfill his obligations, Boaz said he would.

In verse thirteen, Boaz instructed her to tarry that night. Rather than seeing something evil in this, as the scoundrel critics affirm, one should see his earnest desire to protect her. This is in the middle of the night, and no self-respecting man would tell a young woman to go from the field to her home. There would be dangers from animals or even human beings, as well as common dangers such as falling in an unseen pit, et cetera. Every action of Boaz is honorable in this whole text; to state otherwise is to speak against GOD'S word.

**Ruth 3:14-18 "And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and when she held it, and she went into the city. And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day."**

"And she lay at his feet until the morning. And she rose up before one could discern another. For he said, Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing-floor. And he

said, Bring the mantle that is upon thee, and hold it; and she held it; and he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and he went into the city. And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law. Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall; for the man will not rest, until he have finished the thing this day." (ASV)

Where did she lie? Was it by his side or in intimate embrace? No, she lay at his feet. There is no hint of impropriety here as so many have tried to assume over the years. In the early dawn, Ruth arose and went back to the city. Notice Boaz's instructions that no one should know a woman had been there that night. Why? Was he trying to hide a sexual liaison, or was he trying to protect the good name of Ruth? Considering the entire context, the latter must be the right answer. It may also be that he did not want anyone to guess what he was about to do. There are always those who are willing to turn the most innocent events in the Bible into scandal. Maybe the focus should turn to their own minds instead of what is written here. Boaz is seen as a law-abiding man. It was obvious he would be honored to take Ruth as his wife. But the law said there was someone who had that right before he did. What did Boaz do? He informed this other man of his rights. Because Boaz was a law-abiding man, any attempt to make his actions in the text as something immoral reflects poorly not on Boaz but upon the one who makes such a charge.

The "veil" of verse fifteen is not the head covering of oriental women. It is a different word and signifies a kind of shawl. Here one sees Boaz give her a large amount of grain to take home. He continued the care which he had already established for Ruth and Naomi. **"And she went into the city."** The word **"she"** in this phrase is "he" in the Hebrew, according to Barnes (Barnes, p. 477).

When Ruth arrived home, Naomi asked, **"Who art thou, my daughter?"** Berard asks if this: *"was Naomi's idiomatic way of asking 'What hast thou accomplished'?"* (Berard, p. 302). Zerr tells one it means *"How hast thou fared"* (Zerr, p. 383)? Coffman tells one it means, *"My daughter, how hast thou wrought?"* or *"How have you fared, my daughter"* (Coffman, p. 362)? Ruth told her all that had taken place.

Naomi then told Ruth to sit still or be calm. The answer would be coming very quickly. Either the one who had the first right to marry her would do so, or Boaz would take her to wife. In either case her safety would be accomplished; she would be cared for. All of Naomi's dreams and wishes for her daughters-in-law would come to pass for Ruth (Ruth 1:8-9). One cannot help but wonder how things turned out for Orpah. Certainly if she found a husband who took good care of her she was blessed, but she was not blessed as was Ruth.

## **Ruth — Chapter Four**

**Ruth 4:1 "Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down."**

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

The gate of the city was the place where legal business was often accomplished.

**"Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all thy gates, which the LORD thy GOD giveth thee, throughout thy tribes: and they shall judge the people with just judgment"** (Deuteronomy 16:18).

Boaz went to the gate and waited for the

nearest kinsman to come by. When he did, Boaz called out to him to come and sit. Notice that the kinsman's name is not mentioned. This could be due to the author's not knowing what it was. The other possibility is that it was not mentioned on purpose. Both of these possibilities seem to indicate that his name was not important, since these passages are inspired of GOD. It may be that his name was not mentioned because he did not act as the near kinsman, and thus he behaved in a dishonorable way. Instead of gaining a place in history, he is unknown.

**Ruth 4:2 "And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down."**

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

The next thing Boaz did was to gather ten elders of the city together as witnesses. One does not know why the number ten was used here. Some speculate it was because it took ten Jews in a city to have a synagogue. Others think it was because it was a "perfect number." Others believe their laws called for ten men to officiate at any legal proceeding. Whatever the case, Boaz was wise in obtaining witnesses to this transaction.

**Ruth 4:3 "And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:"**

"And he said unto the near kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth the parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's:" (ASV)

Boaz presented the situation to the near kinsman and the witnesses. He advised them of the fact that Naomi had some land which she was going to sell. This was not the idea of selling as we think of it, i.e., transferring a title. Remember, the Jew's land would revert back to them at the Jubilee (Leviticus 25:25).

What she was doing, in effect, was offering the land for rent until that time. The law stated that the near kinsman could redeem the land at any time if he chose.

Boaz also called Elimelech their brother. The word "brother" is used in the broadest sense of a kinsman, possibly even the idea of a fellow Israelite. But here, it signifies a relative, although one does not know which relative (brother, uncle, nephew, etc.).

**Ruth 4:4 "And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it."**

"And I thought to disclose it unto thee, saying, Buy it before them that sit here, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is none to redeem it besides thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it." (ASV)

The KJV says he would "advertise," the ASV says "disclose," and the NKJV says "inform." The idea is that he would not hide the information which might benefit another, even though it might cause him loss. He knew GOD'S laws about inheritance and apparently was more concerned about being righteous than anything else. Truly this was an unselfish man who practiced what the Lord taught in Matthew 7:12.

**"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."**

Further, it shows that GOD and His laws are to come before anything else in one's life.

Boaz told this kinsman that he had first right to redeem this land, and that he himself was next in line to redeem it. He wanted to know if the man would redeem it, so he could

redeem it if the first would not. The nearest kinsman said he would redeem it. Why not? He could "rent" it until the Jubilee, at which time the land would revert back to Elimelech's heirs. But since there were no heirs, then the land would remain in his possession. But as one shall see, Boaz had not told him all of the story.

**Ruth 4:5 "Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance."**

"Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance." (ASV)

Boaz now told him that there was another part of this deal, and that was the marriage of Ruth to whoever got the land. Whoever redeemed the land also had the obligation of raising up children through her which would carry the name of her dead husband. Legally they would not be his children, but they would be her dead husband's. Thus, the inheritance of the land would revert to those children at Jubilee. Boaz had now given the argument he hoped would win Ruth for himself.

**Ruth 4:6 "And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it."**

"And the near kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: take thou my right of redemption on thee; for I cannot redeem it." (ASV)

There are two lines of reasoning as to why the near kinsman could not redeem the land and Ruth. The first deals with finances. There would have been the cost of the land, but then there would be the additional cost of caring for Ruth and Naomi and whatever children were born to Ruth. Second, he might

have already been married, and another wife would have caused contention in his family. Whatever the reason may have been, the results were what Boaz had hoped for. The near kinsman gave Boaz the right to redeem the land and raise up children to Elimelech's family.

**Ruth 4:7 "Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel."**

"Now this was the custom in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning exchanging, to confirm all things: a man drew off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbor; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel."  
(ASV)

Under the Levirate law, if a man died and left no children, then the next nearest kin was to take the former's wife and make her his wife, raising up children to his dead relative. If the one who had this obligation refused, the woman would take off his shoe and spit in his face (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). Such a man was disgraced for life. But apparently there was a different situation here, for this man was not publicly disgraced. The obvious answer as to why he was not disgraced must be found in some valid reason as to why he could not take her. One is not given enough details as to why he had a choice which would not cause him to be disgraced.

Instead, one finds him taking off his own shoe and giving it to Boaz. This seemed to finalize the arrangement which gave Boaz the right to take his place as near kinsman with all of its obligations.

**Ruth 4:8-10 "Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was**

**Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day."**

"So the near kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thyself. And he drew off his shoe. And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day."  
(ASV)

Here one sees the kinsman turn over all rights in this matter to Boaz. One then sees Boaz making his declaration of determination to redeem the land and to take Ruth as his wife. He further called on all the people assembled at the gate as witnesses to this whole transaction. He now had the right to redeem the land and marry Ruth (which was his primary intention all along).

**Ruth 4:11-12 "And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem: And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman."**

"And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. Jehovah make the woman that is come into thy house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem: and let thy house be like the house of Perez, whom

Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which Jehovah shall give thee of this young woman.” (ASV)

Boaz called for the elders at the gate to witness this transaction, and here one sees them acknowledge the transaction. Then the people asked a blessing upon Boaz and Ruth. They first of all wished that Ruth would be like Rachel and Leah, from whom the Israelites came. They were wishing she might have many children, which was particularly accounted a great blessing in those times. Today many people do not want many children, but in those times a man was considered truly blessed if he had a large family.

Ephratah is the ancient name for Bethlehem.

They also wished that Boaz’s house could be like the house of Pharez the son of the foreigner Tamar. She also bore sons which were mighty in Israel. It is interesting to notice that both of these foreign-born women were named in the genealogy of Jesus. They were truly blessed.

**Ruth 4:13 “So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.”**

“So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and he went in unto her, and Jehovah gave her conception, and she bare a son.” (ASV)

This verse tells of Boaz’s marrying Ruth and of her bearing a son from this union. But notice something important here. Who gave the conception? It was from GOD! Remember that in her first marriage she bore no children. Coupled with what is said here, it may be she could not have children. But because of her loyalty to Naomi and her acceptance of GOD, He blessed her with fertility. This son (Obed) is important, for it is through him that David would come, and through David the promised Messiah would

come.

The abortionist should be careful. It is GOD who gives the life in the womb. Man does not have the right to take that life and destroy it.

**“Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed: for in the image of God made he man”**  
(Genesis 9:6)

**Ruth 4:14 “And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.”**

“And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be Jehovah, who hath not left thee this day without a near kinsman; and let his name be famous in Israel.” (ASV)

The women were happy for Naomi. They had been glad to see her when she returned, even though she was bitter. It is apparent they had continued to wish her well and were indeed happy for her when this child was born. That Obed was the one being spoken of here is obvious from the next verse. There was now a son to carry on the family name. Christians ought to rejoice when good things happen to their brethren.

**“Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep”**  
(Romans 12:15).

**Ruth 4:15 “And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him.”**

“And he shall be unto thee a restorer of life, and a nourisher of thine old age, for thy daughter-in-law, who loveth thee, who is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him.” (ASV)

The women said Naomi was indeed blessed through the birth of Obed. Notice that the women spoke of the great love Ruth had for Naomi. It is obvious that her love and care

of Naomi had been widely known and appreciated by those who had witnessed it. They gave Ruth a tremendous compliment in saying she was better to Naomi than seven sons. The ancients desired sons more than anything else, and to say that Ruth was better than seven (complete or perfect number) sons was the ultimate compliment.

**Ruth 4:16 “And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.”**

“And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.” (ASV)

Here one sees that Naomi had a part in raising Obed. She became his nurse. This indicates her position in the house of Boaz as an honored caretaker. Her role would obviously give her the ability to teach him about the family, and like Jochebed of old, she taught him GOD’S laws.

**Ruth 4:17-22 “And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.”**

“And the women her neighbors gave it 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. Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez begat Hezron, and Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, and Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, and Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.” (ASV)

These verses are important because they show one the genealogy which eventually led

to the Messiah. Ruth was the great-grandmother of David, king of Israel. Notice also the name Ram, which is the same as Aram.

