

RUTH CHAPTER ONE

This is a book of the history of Israel and is one of the two books in the Bible where a woman is the main character. Many people believe that Samuel is the author of the book of Ruth. The scribe who wrote it is not important. God is the author. In this story, we see that Jesus is descended from both Jew and Gentile, because Ruth is a Moabite woman. This book begins with a famine in the land. God had forbidden the Hebrews to intermarry with the Moabites since the Moabites were descended from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters and thus were under a curse.

Many believe the book of Ruth to be the most beautiful love story in the Bible. One of the quotes from this book is used in marriages. That is Ruth 1:16 "whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people [shall be] my people, and thy God my God:" The favorite quotation, however is not stated to a man by a woman. It is Ruth speaking to Naomi.

The teaching in Ruth is the kinsman redeemer. The kinsman redeemer law is found in Deuteronomy 25:5 and following. I will read just one verse. **"If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother unto her."** In other words, the brother was to raise up children to bear his brothers name.

It is strange, to me, that Boaz's mother was Rahab, the harlot, a Gentile, from Jericho. Ruth was a Moabite which was a Gentile. Both Ruth and Boaz are in the lineage of Jesus. Their son was Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David.

1 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.

Beth-lehem”, which is located in the center of fertile farmland, means “house of bread. Moab means wash pot. So they are going from the house of bread into the wash pot. Throughout the Old Testament, the Lord sometimes used famine to judge a nation or to get His people’s attention. This seems the case here, because the famine in “Judah” was localized. Moab, which had food, is only 55 miles from Beth-lehem. Instead of trusting God to provide food, Elimelech tried to solve the problem by moving his wife, Naomi, and their two sons to “Moab, thus violating the meaning of his name, “My God is King.”

2 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.

Elimelech intended to live temporarily in Moab as a resident alien until the famine passed. It is often said that Elimelech went to Moab against God's wishes but we know that God's plan was for them to come to Moab. Nothing happens by accident to God's people. What we have here is God working in the background.

3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

It is probable that the father died quickly after he came into the land of Moab. Then she was left, and her two sons; in a strange land. She without a husband, and they without a father.

4 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.

Though the Moabites were an evil and despised Canaanite tribe, Elimelech and Naomi’s sons, “Mahlon” and “Chilion,” married women from there instead of returning to Beth-lehem to find Israelite wives. What began as a temporary journey to escape hardship became a decade of disobedience in which the family abandoned the land God gave them and settled into a new way of life.

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Naomi believed that the Lord had afflicted her with bitter days for the rest of her life. It seems that there were no children in either of these families. I believe that God took the lives of these three men because of their disobedience. Elimelec by leaving Bethlehem and the two sons for marrying Moabite women, which they were forbidden to do. Then we have Boaz marrying Ruth with God's blessing. God does work in mysterious ways.

6 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.

The Lord had sent rain to break the famine. What has been perceived by Naomi for bad is actually planned by God for good. This whole setup is being used by God to bring spiritual prosperity through the line of David in the person of Christ. Naomi, of course, is not aware of any of this. She just wants to go home. Does anyone besides me see something odd in the timing here? They have now been in Moab for more than ten years. Famines do not usually last that long.

7 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.

Ruth, widowed and childless abandoned her family, country and faith to accompany her mother-in-law, Naomi, to Beth-lehem. Once there she was the sole breadwinner for herself and Naomi. After Boaz married her, she bore a son who became the grandfather of king, David.

8 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.

All three of these women, being widows, would have been poverty stricken beggars. As foreigners the two daughters in law would have been in even worse shape than Naomi herself.

9 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.

This is a picture of repentance. Repentance means to reverse your direction. Naomi left the place where she was, to return to the place where she belonged. At this point both daughters in law were still with her. I picture this as being at the outskirts, or edge, of the town.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

She prays first for the general blessing, that God will show them mercy, and secondly for the special blessing, that they may find rest and peace in a new home. She knew the girls were still young and they would marry again.

11 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?

Naomi is concerned for her daughters in law but it is an odd concern. She seems to be thinking only of their being able to get husbands but at the same time she is urging them to return to a land which worshiped pagan gods.

12 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;

It is certainly unlikely that they will find husbands in Israel. They would be foreigners and extremely poor. In addition to that they must be nearing thirty years of age in a society where girls married in their teens.

13 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.

Naomi considers her problems to be personal and from God. However, famines, war, pestilence and such are not personal but affect the righteous as well as the wicked. Think of the two hurricanes we had last year. Both Harvey and Irma affected the lives of Christians as well as the lost. These, and things like them, are wake up calls to the nation. Our nation chooses to ignore the warnings.

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

By deciding to stay in Moab, Orpah chose what seemed easy, returning to her old life and beliefs, and she is never mentioned again. In contrast, Ruth followed a God she did not yet know, into an uncertain future, among potentially hostile strangers, and she became a matriarch in the lineage of Jesus. Decisions determined destiny then and they still do today.

15 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.

Notice that Naomi has deliberately sent Orpah back to her gods. This does not speak well for Naomi's character as far as God is concerned. If Naomi is truly a believer then she has just knowingly sent the daughter in law to a place where she has no chance to be saved.

16 And Ruth said, Intreat 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:

17 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.

This was a real outburst of affection from Ruth. Notice that Ruth has not only attached herself permanently to Naomi but has also consecrated herself to Jehovah God. Naomi does seem to have real love for Ruth as she would have for her own daughter.

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

Naomi accepted Ruth's decision. Naomi has finally realized, that nothing she can say will change Ruth's mind.

19 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?

Elimelech's family must have been well liked in Bethlehem. Many of the city remembered Naomi and welcomed her back. Elimelech was of the tribe of Judah and of a family in the direct lineage of the Messiah though the family was not yet known.

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

Naomi is still blaming God for her personal calamities. The problems Naomi is having are caused by Naomi and her immediate family. Her husband is the one who decided to disregard God and leave for Moab. Naomi may well have even been the instigator of this.

21 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?

The Lord hath brought me home again empty. She has been deprived of her husband, children, and substance; she acknowledges the hand of God in it, and seems to bear it patiently except for the bitterness. She did have a husband and two sons when she left Bethlehem, but she certainly did not come back empty. She had Ruth. She does not have material things, but is blessed to have the great unselfish love of Ruth.

22 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.

Ruth stands out as a picture of future Gentile conversions. Israel's barley harvest occurs in April and May. Naomi and Ruth returned at a

time when God was again blessing His people. Naomi was soon to have a new beginning with God. It is never too late to start fresh with Him.

RUTH CHAPTER TWO

1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

The point of the verse appears to be that Elimelech's relative was well-known both to "Naomi" and her husband. Only because Naomi was Elimelech's wife could Boaz qualify to become the redeemer. Boaz was a near kinsman of Elimelech. The name "Boaz" means in him is strength. It seems that Boaz was a wealthy man, and was also held in high esteem by the people of Bethlehem as well.

2 And Ruth the Moabite 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.

The corn here was barley. The term is also used of wheat or any other grass type grain. This is not the maize of the Americas. The corners of the field as well as any missed grain was left to the poor. This was God's system of welfare. One had to work in order to eat.

3 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.

That word "hap" was an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning good luck. Our word happy comes from that. Actually luck had nothing to do with this. God put Ruth in the field of Boaz.

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

The fields were just out of Bethlehem. It seemed that Boaz lived in the city, but owned fields here, where Ruth was gleaning. By his greeting,

we know that Boaz was a man of God. He was not cruel to his workers. They seemed to have a respect for him as well. They answered him "The LORD bless thee".

5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

There was something different about Ruth's appearance. She stood out from the other young women. The scripture never says she was exceptionally beautiful so it must have been something else. Lot had taken a wife while he and Abraham were in Egypt, so the difference may well have been one of color. Ruth would have been what was once called a quadroon, that is one who was one fourth black. I'm sure that term is not politically correct today even though it is not a derogatory term.

6 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:

It is unlikely that the servant knew Ruth's name so he describes her as "that Moabitish damsel". Naomi, was a name that Boaz was well acquainted, and of whose return he had been informed. Perhaps had even seen her in person. Probably, word had gotten to Boaz that Naomi had brought a young woman back with her from Moab. Now Boaz has seen her with his own eyes.

7 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.

Ruth is polite. She had asked to glean even though she had the right to do this. She is also a hard worker and a self starter. She arrived early and took only one short break.

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

First, Ruth found “refuge” under the protective “wings” of Jehovah, the God of Israel. Then He sent her Boaz, her kinsman-redeemer, and she came under his protective covering. Boaz was about 45-55 years old and would naturally see Ruth as a daughter. It seems that Boaz sought her out and spoke to her. She would not have been with the other harvesters but would have been in the rear picking up what they had left. It seems that Boaz immediately wanted to help this young woman. That is God's hand at work again. She would be very near the young women, who were tying up the sheaves. This would make her the first to glean and this would be a big advantage for her.

9 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.

These young men are like young men everywhere. They were always ready to tease or to take advantage of a young woman, especially a stranger. Boaz is well aware of this and had given them strict orders to leave her alone.

10 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 shouldst take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

She humbly says she does not understand why he has chosen her to bless. She bows herself before him to show her humbleness. She realizes that Boaz is showing her special favor. She has never met him before, so it is difficult for her to understand.

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

People have been talking about Ruth and all that they have had to say about her character is good. She has built a good reputation in taking

care of her mother in law as well as a good reputation as far as her character is concerned.

12 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.

Here Boaz asks God's blessing on Ruth. Boaz is also taking Ruth under his own protection. This is the Old Testament way of thinking, that God would reward you in the here and now. This was partly true then, as we have Abraham, David and Job as well as others for example. This is not true today as wealth is no longer a sign of God's particular blessing.

13 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.

She thought it was an advantage to be a handmaiden of so kind a person as Boaz. She knew that he had power to help her and Naomi in their need. She also was not assuming that she would get the same treatment as the Hebrew handmaidens. I get the sense that there is nothing romantic at this point. For one thing, Boaz considers himself too old for her.

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

By personally giving her his food, he is demonstrating to any onlooker that Ruth should be treated with respect and kindness. He further provided for her by telling his workers to "purposely" leave extra gleanings for her.

15 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:

Normally the gleaners were to stay well behind the reapers as well as the women who were tying up the sheaves of grain. This moves Ruth well ahead of the other gleaners and gives her more to choose from. Boaz could simply have said to the reapers to give her a couple of bushels of grain but that was not the way things were done. Ruth still had to work for what she received.

16 And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

That is, when they had reaped a handful, instead of laying it in its proper order, to be taken up by those that gathered after them, the reapers are told to scatter some about, or let it fall where they cut it. Boaz is getting more and more generous to Ruth as the day goes on. The harvesters are instructed to make sure she has all she can carry.

17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

An “ephah equals 22-30 pounds. This represents a tremendous amount of grain left in the field. Boaz’s gracious generosity and Ruth’s hard work paid off. They beat the grain with a stick, or beat it against a rock to get the barley out. This would feed these two ladies for a good while. Notice that Ruth did not quit until the job was done. She was industrious, as well as of good character.

18 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.

This is part of the lunch that Ruth has saved for Naomi. Now we know that she is also not a pig.

19 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 shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought to day is Boaz.

The mother-in-law is so pleased with what Ruth has brought back, she wants to know the details of her gleaning. She is aware that Ruth was

greatly blessed with so much from one day's gleaning. Naomi would well remember the name of Boaz. He was a close relative of her husband.

20 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.

This pictures the reality of Jesus the Redeemer doing a greater work, by reclaiming those who needed to be spiritually redeemed out of the slavery to sin. So, Boaz pictures Christ, who, redeemed those of us who; were slaves to sin, had lost all earthly privileges in the Fall, had been alienated by sin from God. Boaz stands in the direct line of Christ. This turn of events marks the point where Naomi's human emptiness, begins to be refilled by the Lord. This is the first time that Ruth is aware that Boaz is their near-kinsman.

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

We see that Ruth was very pleased by the kindness Boaz has shown her. She appreciates him allowing her to come again and glean from the field, until harvest is over. She is especially pleased of being able to glean, so near the harvesters, until the entire harvest is over. She will be able to get enough food that some can be stored for winter.

22 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.

You can see the wheels starting to turn in Naomi's mind. Ruth the Moabite would not be treated with such mercy and grace by strangers outside of the family. Naomi realizes what Boaz is trying to do for them and encourages Ruth to stay and glean in that field, until harvest is completely over. Ruth does just as her mother-in-law tells her. Naomi wants her to stay by the maidens to stay out of danger.

23 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.

Barley harvest usually began about mid-April and wheat harvest extended to mid-June, a period of intense labor for about two months. The wheat harvest would extend this harvesting by over a month. It appears that Ruth spent a lot of time in the field of Boaz.

1 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?

The “rest” spoken of is marriage. The “rest” would be the fact that she would not have to spend the rest of her life gleaning for enough grain to keep body and soul together. This is a picture of the Bride of Christ resting in her salvation.

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

We are never told how close a kinsman Boaz was. The best guess is that he was a cousin to Elimelech. One leading commentator says this is a picture of the end of the nations as foretold in Daniel chapter 2 vs 34-35 which says; **Thou sawest till that a stone was cut out without hands, which smote the image upon his feet [that were] of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces. {2:35} Then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold, broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshingfloors; and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them: and the stone that smote the image became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth.**

There goes the UN when the Lord returns.

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

Naomi now has a plan to insure Ruth's future as well as her own.

Obviously going to the threshing floor at night, after the men had been drinking, carried some risk. This seems to be an all, or nothing, plan. If Ruth is found out there is unlikely to be a second chance.

4 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.

The significance of uncovering Boaz's feet is found in Deu. 25:8-10, the law of the kinsman redeemer. **Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and [if] he stand [to it,] and say, I like not to take her; {25:9} Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. {25:10} And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.** So that is what this business of uncovering the feet is all about.

5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

Since Boaz was a generation older than Ruth, this overture would indicate Ruth's desire to marry Boaz, which the older Boaz would not have initiated with a younger woman.

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

She washed and anointed herself, and put on her best clothes before she went down. And when she was there, took care not to make herself known to anyone, especially to Boaz, and marked the place where he lay down after he had eaten.

7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.

Lying at Boaz's feet was an act of submission, a request that required him to decide whether or not to protect her. She made a bold marriage proposal, perhaps because Boaz's age prevented him from proposing

to her, yet she did so humbly and honorably, in accordance with Jewish law. It appears that while he slept peacefully, Ruth slipped in.

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

He had a bad dream. It is pitch dark and someone is in bed with him. He may, or may not, know it's a woman, perhaps by her smell. She probably would have had on perfume.

9 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.

In answer to Boaz's question about who she is Ruth's answer is plain. She identifies herself as one of his maids and asks him to take her under his wings, a phrase he had already used with her. She even uses language to remind him that he is a near kinsman with a right, even a responsibility, in this situation.

10 And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

She had not sought a husband of the young men, whether rich or poor. He had great admiration for Ruth. He is saying that, the blessing that came upon him by her choosing him, was the greatest of the kindness she had shown.

11 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.

Everyone was aware of the fact that Ruth was a virtuous woman. Because of her strength of character. Ruth would have been a wonderful wife for anyone. Boaz is willing to accept her as his wife.

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

Obviously Boaz intends to treat Ruth with honor and respect. The

news there was another kinsman nearer must have come as a shock to Ruth. You do understand that this was something that Ruth had no say in except that she could have refused to marry either. In effect, Boaz will be buying Ruth.

13 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.

It is apparent that Boaz would like to marry Ruth but he still intends to follow God's law in the matter and will give her to the nearer kinsman if necessary. He is also protecting her reputation by insisting that she leave early enough that she will not be recognized.

14 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.

Boaz even insisted on no appearance of evil. She must leave early to keep her good name. No one was to know she spent the night at his feet on the threshing-floor. They each wanted to protect the honor of the other.

15 Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.

Boaz sends Ruth home with a large load of barley. Naomi correctly takes this as a message from Boaz. She assures Ruth that Boaz will take the necessary steps to marry her.

16 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.

Naomi is asking her if she was now Boaz's wife. If that question surprises you, keep in mind the biblical definition of marriage. Ruth really did not know how to answer this, except to tell her exactly what happened. She told her all that the man had done to her. What

kindness he had shown her, what promises he had made to her, and that either he, or a nearer kinsman, would marry her, and redeem her husband's estate.

17 And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

She had brought back all the barley she could carry, to show Naomi of his good intentions. Ruth had probably told Boaz of Naomi encouraging her to do this thing. He wanted to show appreciation to Naomi also since Naomi had approved of the possibility of Ruth being his wife.

18 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.

Naomi knows that Boaz will get this settled as quickly as possible, because he wants to marry Ruth. Ruth is undoubtedly a little concerned, because she wanted Boaz for a husband, not the other kinsman. Naomi also knows that God blesses those who keep his commandments and Boaz had already proved he was a godly man.

RUTH CHAPTER FOUR

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.

This is how legal matters were handled in those days. There were no courthouses. Legal matters were handled by elders who "sat in the gate" of the city. Deu.16:18 says this; "**Judges and officers shalt thou make thee in all the gates, which the LORD thy God giveth thee,...** You may remember that Lot was one of the city councilmen who sat in the gate of Sodom.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye

down here. And they sat down.

Ten is the Gentile number but there are twelve people involved here so what we have is a picture of Christ redeeming both Israel (12) and the Gentiles (10).

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:

There is no mention of a marriage yet. The nearer kinsman seems anxious to purchase the land but when the marriage is mentioned he backs away.

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.

Boaz expresses his interest in the land of Naomi but gives the first option to the nearer kinsman. The nearer kinsman accepts until he realizes that Ruth comes with the deal.

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.

Now there is a new twist to the circumstances. The other man has to marry Ruth, to be able to redeem the land. Boaz reminds him that Ruth is a Moabitess. He does not stress the fact that she is a Hebrew by marriage to a Hebrew. His first child will belong to Ruth's dead husband.

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.

The nearer kinsman already has a Jewish wife and to accept the deal and marry Ruth would be wife number two and would then jeopardize his own inheritance. My thought here is that the Jewish wife was the

one with the money or a future inheritance. What this really is is a picture of God the Father who can not take the Gentile bride since he is already married to Israel.

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.

Since Boaz had arranged all the business details relative to acting as the near kinsman, no disgrace would attach to the nearer kinsman. The transfer of the “shoe” symbolized the relinquishing of his right to act as the nearest kinsman and the passing of his authority in the matter to another.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

9 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.

For the record Boaz announces to the witnesses that he has now purchased everything belonging to Naomi and has also purchased Ruth's hand in marriage. Don't miss the fact that these two ladies have no say in these dealings. This is often said to be a love story, and it may have been but nowhere in the book does it say that Boaz and Ruth loved each other. I see it more as a business deal.

10 Moreover Ruth the Moabites, 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.

God's divine plan is in action as Boaz has redeemed Naomi's land and purchased Ruth's hand in marriage. Naomi, once empty, is now full; Ruth, once a widow, is married; and most important of all, the Lord has prepared Christ's line of descent in David, through Boaz and Obed, back to Judah to fulfill the messianic lineage.

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

When the people ask that Ruth be made like Leah and Rachel they are asking that she have a large family. Leah and Rachel, the wives of Jacob, had twelve sons, the foundation of the nation of Israel.

12 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.

The reason Pharez is mentioned here is because he is the ancestor of Boaz, so this ties Boaz to the tribe of Judah which is the tribe to produce the Messiah. This is important since Ruth is the only Old Testament book that puts king David in the line of Judah.

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.

There it is. Life begins at conception and it is God who gives the conception.

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.

Keep in mind that it was legal in God's sight for Boaz to marry Ruth, because she was a Hebrew by marriage. Her first husband sinned in God's sight, because she was a Moabite. Now, she is Hebrew. It is legal for Boaz to marry her, and be blessed of God. The elders witnessed the whole thing. Boaz had done everything decently and pleasing to God. Boaz had kept the law.

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.

Seven represented the number of perfection and thus 7 sons would make the complete family . However, Ruth exceeded this standard all by herself. It is true that Ruth had been better to Naomi than any son could have been. She will have her hopes renewed in this grandson. She had lost hope, when her husband and two sons died. Now, she is renewed.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

Grandmother with the first grandchild. That says it all.

17 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.

The name Obed, means servant in the Hebrew. Here is the only place in the Old Testament where a child was named by someone other than the immediate family. The ladies in the neighborhood gave him his name. The neighbors felt as if God had given this baby to Naomi to replace her son. This book is obviously written a little later, because of the mention of Jesse and David. This would be entirely possible, if Samuel was the writer. Boaz and Ruth were the great-grandparents of David.

18 Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

These last five verses are the point of the book. This gives the lineage of the lord Jesus Christ from Pharez to David. Pharez was the firstborn son of Tamar who had this son by deceiving Judah into sleeping with her. You find that account in Genesis 38.