

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson Notes: Lessons 1-6

You will find here the Lesson Notes for the 6-part study we conducted in our Sunday School class on the book of Ruth.

As the course title states, this is not intended to be a detailed study of this precious and prescient short story. Volumes have been written about the events that transpired in this story, explanations of the Scriptural, historical, and cultural practices that are acted out in this story, and the prophetic significances of the redemptive pre-enactments that the characters lived out in their actions – all of which were sovereignly superintended by God’s redemptive purpose and plan and pointed to Jesus Christ and His Gospel.

I am not capable, nor was it my purpose, to reproduce those studies. Think of these Lesson Study Notes more as “talking points” to guide us through the reading and discussion of these lessons. All of these “talking points” opened up much more explanation and discussion of the exciting truths that are written here in this Romance of Redemption.

As I have reminded our class repeatedly, these lessons are not intended to be structured lessons or studies. Rather they are prepared and presented to help us all better learn how to read our Bibles on a daily basis and search for and find Jesus Christ there. After all, the Bible is “God’s Story about His Son, Jesus Christ, to us” and Jesus Himself declared that they ALL testify to Him [*see John 5.37-40 & Luke 24.25-27, 44-48*]. So what we want to do is better learn how we should read, study, understand, and most of all, worship Jesus Christ as He is promised, prophesied, and pre-enacted in the Old Testament Scriptures.

I use the word “pre-enactment” a lot in our Sunday School lessons especially when we are studying from the Old Testament Scriptures because that is what the whole OT is: *it is a pre-enactment of the Redeemer God would send us “when the fullness of time had come” [see 1 Peter 1.10-12 & Galatians 4.4]*. This Book of Ruth is rich and replete with such pre-enactments.

So I’m making them available to you with the prayer and hope that as we read the Word of God together, we’ll hear the echoes and invitation of Philip’s question to the Ethiopian eunuch, ***“Do you understand what you are reading?”*** When the Ethiopian answered, ***“How can I, unless someone guides me?” ... “Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the Good News about Jesus” [see Acts 8.26-35]***.

I did use three resources in particular to enrich my own understanding and help me prepare to present these lessons to our class. Each of them was extremely helpful to me in distinctive ways:

[Christopher Ash, Teaching Ruth & Esther](#)

[Daniel I. Block, Judges, Ruth \[The New American Commentary\]](#)

[Sinclair B. Ferguson, Faithful God](#)

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson Notes: Lessons 1-6

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH**Lesson 1****Introduction**

Before we even read the first word here in our new study in the Book of Ruth, I want to be sure that we understand as clearly as we can what we are reading in this little book and what we are looking for.

Do you understand what you are reading?

I am reminded of the question that Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch when the Holy Spirit sent him to preach Christ to the interested seeker as he was reading Isaiah from a manuscript. The eunuch was intently reading as Philip approached him.

³⁰ So Philip ran to him and heard him reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?”

The eunuch answered:

“How can I unless someone guides me!” And he invited Philip to come up and sit with him.

And so Philip began to explain the Isaiah 53 Scripture he was reading. The eunuch was fascinated by the centuries-old text he was reading:

³⁴ And the eunuch said to Philip, “About whom, I ask you, does the prophet say this, about himself or about someone else?” ³⁵ Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning with this Scripture he told him the good news about Jesus.

Philip preached the Gospel of Jesus Christ from that OT Scripture!

And so as we read the Book of Ruth, we need to be sure we are looking for, and that we see the Gospel of Jesus Christ in this OT short story. We could even begin each lesson and study of this little book with “Tell Me the Story of Jesus” because that is precisely what the Book of Ruth is!

Some Scriptures to use as ‘keys’ to reading and understanding Ruth

Here are some Scriptures to keep on the front burner of our thinking as we read this story:

2 Timothy 3.14-17 ~ ¹⁴ But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have firmly believed, knowing from whom you learned it ¹⁵ and how from childhood *you have been acquainted with the sacred writings, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.* ¹⁶ All Scripture is breathed

out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,¹⁷ that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work. [NOTE: this would have included the Book of Ruth.]

2 Peter 1.20-21 ~²⁰ knowing this first of all, that ***no prophecy of Scripture comes from someone's own interpretation.***²¹ For no prophecy was ever produced by the will of man, ***but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.*** [NOTE: this would have included the Book of Ruth.]

1 Peter 1.10-12 ~¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, ***the prophets who prophesied about the grace that was to be yours searched and inquired carefully,***¹¹ ***inquiring what person or time the Spirit of Christ in them was indicating when He predicted the sufferings of Christ and the subsequent glories.***¹² It was revealed to them that they were serving not themselves but you, in the things that have now been announced to you through those who preached the good news to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven, things into which angels long to look. [NOTE: this would have included the Book of Ruth.]

Luke 24.25-27 & 44-46 ~²⁵ And he said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken!²⁶ Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?"²⁷ ***And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.***⁴⁴ Then he said to them, "These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that ***everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.***"⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead,⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem." [NOTE: this would have included the Book of Ruth.]

John 5.37-40 ~³⁷ And ***the Father who sent me has Himself borne witness about me.*** His voice you have never heard, His form you have never seen,³⁸ and ***you do not have His word abiding in you,*** for you do not believe the One whom He has sent.³⁹ You ***search the Scriptures*** because you think that in them you have eternal life; ***and it is they that bear witness about me,***⁴⁰ yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life. [NOTE: this would have included the Book of Ruth.]

So, all of these testimonies in Scripture itself tell us that *all of the OT Scriptures* in some way teach us about Christ!

So we could very well begin this study and this lesson by singing “Tell me the story of Jesus, write on my heart every word...” or “...beyond the sacred page, I seek Thee, Lord! My spirit pants for Thee, O Living Word!”

Let me give you here just a few ‘rules of thumb’ that we will keep in mind to help us hear the Voice of ‘the Spirit of Christ’ who is in the human author of Ruth [whoever he may be...].

- I have told you before to do these three things: [1] read this book straight through several times to keep the flow of the story in your mind; [2] pay close attention to the words the human author intentionally uses and especially repetitions of words; [3] ask questions of the text and the author[s], both human and the Holy Spirit.
- The questions you need to ask are the same as you would ask in order to understand any story / we call them the 4 ‘w’s and the 1 ‘h’: who, when, where, why, and how.
- Our questions will also include inquiries into the customs and culture of the timeframe in which the story took place, both historical and Scriptural customs

Who wrote the Book of Ruth?

Whoever the human author of Ruth was [and we don’t know definitely...for sure], we do know this: God Himself, through the Holy Spirit, is the Author of this book. And, we also know that God is telling us the Story of His Son. In fact, one short definition of the Bible can be expressed as: ***“The Bible is God’s Story about His Son, Jesus Christ, to us.”*** [from Biblearc]. This Book of Ruth is a very significant part of that Story.

What are some of the pointers to Christ?

1/ Ruth is the great-grandmother of King David.

The first very obvious pointer to Christ is found in the end of the Book, chapter 4.18-22. NOTE THIS: King David is the only reason we even know who Ruth is and the reason why this Book was written. If David had not become king, then he and Ruth and all the rest of them would have remained among the millions of unknown, nameless, obscure, forgotten [except to God] farmers, shepherders, craftspeople, village people of those generations. But, after David became king, then the historians began to record the stories of where David came from. Ruth was only three generations before David. So her story became a chapter in David’s historical legacy.

2/ Ruth is in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

God gives Ruth her place in the historical genealogy of Jesus Christ [Matthew 1.1-6].

3/ Besides these obvious name-pointers that lead to Christ, there are also the pictorial ‘prequels’ of Christ that God wrote into Ruth’s story.

Redeemer - As we have repeatedly said: God Himself wrote this Story of Jesus ahead of time in the historical times and lives of these characters. Yes, they acted on their own, and they made their choices as God directed them by His sovereign Providence. But, God was sovereignly orchestrating their lives and the events of their lives to shape a ‘prequel’ of the coming of Christ into our world to be our Redeemer [as Boaz pre-figures in chapters 3 & 4].

Kindness [mercy, steadfast love / ‘khesed’ – Three separate times, the Author characterizes both Ruth and Boaz with ‘kindness’ [ch 1.8; 2.20; 3.10]. This ‘khesed’ is one of the most common words used in the OT and then carried over into the NT to identify God’s covenant love-commitment to His people and His faithfulness to all the promises He gives us in Christ. Boaz recognizes the covenant love and faithfulness that Yahweh had given them in chapter 2.12 when he blessed Ruth: “The LORD [Yahweh] repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!”

“SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH” will be understood, interpreted, and appreciated only as we read and study it in the Person of Christ and His Gospel.

We can very truly call the Book and Story of Ruth “The Story of Christ” if we will read this Book as we would develop film in a darkroom. When you ‘shoot’ a sheet of film on the camera, you begin developing it by placing it in trays of developer and fixer [or at least we did it that way in the old days...]. As you swish it in the developer, the emulsion begins to dissolve leaving clear places in the film. As you watch it develop, faint outlines and images begin to take shape. You can recognize the outlines, shapes, and figures, but without clear detail. Only when you take the film [negative] and then ‘burn’ it onto the printing plate to receive the ink to print it ... will the clear positive image appear. Jesus Christ and His Gospel is the ‘clear positive image,’ but we will see very distinct outlines and images here in our study **SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH!**

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson 2

Chapter 1: Emptiness and Exile

Please keep in mind that our laser-focus is going to be the same as God's focus was when He inspired the writing of this book in the original author [1 Peter 1.10-12]: our focus is **SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH!**

The Spirit of Christ who inspired this book knew where He was going: both in the telling of the Story and in the coming generations of human/redemptive History [remember: history is His-Story].

More than just a sweet love story ... or valuable life-lessons

If we were looking only for a good moral human-interest or love story, or if all we wanted to do was to make some good applicable life-lessons, then we could outline the book by chapters like an author did in a commentary I have:

1. Till Death Do Us Part
2. Boy Meets Girl
3. Some Enchanted Evening
4. Happily [for]Ever After

This outline is cute, catchy, and creative. But Ruth is more than just a sweet love story [though it is certainly that]; this is a 'pre-enactment' of the coming of Christ into our world to redeem us from our sins! This is a 'prequel' of the Gospel! This is the promise, pattern, and pointer to Christ as our Heavenly Husband who will come to take us and marry us to Himself forever! And, God The Holy Spirit knows that when He is inspiring the original author to write this story.

So, THAT is what we are going to be reading, studying, and looking for: **SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH!**

Just a brief reminder how we are reading this book ... go back and re-read from Lesson 1 about Philip's encounter with the Ethiopian eunuch and how they read from Isaiah...

So, let's get started by keep asking ourselves these three questions as we make our way through the scenes and movements of this story:

- 1. Why did the author write this book?**
 - a. Of course, the main key answer is in chapter 4.18-22
 - b. But there is also much to be learned about God's Presence and Providence...
- 2. Why did the author write the words he wrote?**

- a. We'll note how the author teaches his lessons he wants us to learn by using very specific words
- b. We'll pay particular attention to the contexts and connotations of those words
- c. We'll also learn intended lessons by repetitions of words and contrasts

3. Why did the author write the story the way he wrote it?

- a. ...because without a doubt, the author wants us to see the hand of God, not only in the physical providences, but also in His larger redemptive plan for Israel and also for ... the nations [?, as in "Moabites"]

I know all these questions will all weave in together, but also each question can be considered with much interest on its own merit...

So, let's get started on chapter 1...

THEME: Emptiness and Exile

MAJOR MOVEMENTS:

- I. v 1: The context
- II. vv 2-5: Naomi is emptied
- III. vv 6-14b: Naomi pleads with her two daughters-in-law to "return" [or 'stay'] in their native home, Moab
- IV. vv 14c-18: Ruth's promise and response of love ... she made a covenant commitment to Naomi, and made a profession of faith in Yahweh, the God of Israel
- V. vv 19-22: Naomi and Ruth return and arrive in Bethlehem

I - v 1: The context

There are three elements in this contextual setting:

- 'when the judges ruled'
 - there are almost no nice words we could use to describe the days when the judges ruled: civil disorder, social unrest, violence, debauchery, perversions
 - and yet, in the midst of all this, God is still working out His sovereign and gracious plan of redemption
- 'there was a famine'
 - the famine was no more a random, chance fluke of nature than God's giving them bread later [v 6]
 - God intended for famine to bring them to repentance and back to Him
- 'in the land'
 - the land was not just chattel or real estate ... the land was God's inheritance given to His people, and where He would dwell with them and bless them. To leave the land was to leave the Presence and blessing of Yahweh, their God [see Lev 25.23-24]

- watch for the repetitions of ‘land’ and ‘fields’ and for contrasts of ‘land’ and ‘country’ – between ‘Bethlehem’ and ‘Moab’

II - vv 2-5: Naomi is emptied

- 1/ So here’s where the downward spiral into emptiness begins [see v 21]
- 2/ Their story begins in Bethlehem
 - name means ‘house of bread’ [see also 1.6 & 2.14]
 - Micah 5.2 – just an ‘insignificant’ village in Judah
 - as far as the human author is concerned, Bethlehem’s distinction is just as the home village of David
 - but God knows where He’s going with this Story
- 3/ They all go to sojourn in the country of Moab
 - we can’t begin to feel the visceral cringe factor that ‘Moab’ would have had to an Israelite in that day [Gen 19.30-38; Num 22-25; Deut 23 3-6; Judges 3.12-14]
- 4/ Note the progress of ‘emptiness’:
 - v 1 ‘famine’; v 3 ‘died’; v 3 ‘left with’; v 5 ‘died’; v 5 ‘left without’
 - God is bringing Naomi to the painful and bitter end of herself and all her resources for joy – so He can bring her back to Himself and begin filling her with His fullness
 - and all of us are receiving the fullness of the blessing of Christ as a result of this...

III - vv 6-14b: Naomi pleads with her two daughters-in-law to “return” [or ‘stay’] in their native home, Moab

- 1/ This is obviously the bulk of the story in chapter 1 – the author begins in verse 6 with twelve repetitions of some form of the word ‘return / turn back / go back’: vv 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15 (x2), 16, 21, 22 (x2)
 - find at least 3 reasons why Naomi says Orpah and Ruth should ‘return’ back to their previous country and families [vv 8-13]
- 2/ God’s blessing is not in Moab – it is in ‘the land’ of His covenant promises / So God must devise the means to bring Naomi back to ‘the land’ ... with Ruth
- 3/ The author also introduces another word in v 8: ‘kindly’ [from ‘chesed’]
 - this is the same word used so often in Scripture to speak of God’s covenant love and faithfulness.
 - the word is often translated: ‘mercy’ / ‘steadfast love’ / ‘lovingkindness’
 - God is obviously pointing to Himself as the covenant God of Israel [note Boaz’s covenant blessing on Ruth in ch 2.12]
 - ...AND He is ‘pre-enacting’ how He will send Jesus Christ into our world as our Merciful Redeemer [see Lk 1.76-79]

4/ Naomi also expresses her first grievous complaint against Yahweh's treatment of her in how He has emptied her of all her fullness and joy [v 13]

IV - vv 14c-18: Ruth's promise and response of love ... she made a covenant commitment to Naomi, and made a profession of faith in Yahweh, the God of Israel

1/ v 14c begins the story of Ruth = "but Ruth clung to her..." [by the way, this is the same word found in Gen 2.24]

2/ Naomi again attempts to persuade Ruth to go back to her former people and gods – this was the only humanly reasonable recourse for Ruth

3/ But Naomi's God / Yahweh of Israel had won Ruth's heart – and the commitment of her life

4/ Find and repeat the five promises / vows / commitments Ruth made to Naomi – and by extension, to Naomi's God [vv 16-17]

5/ Think how these same promises/vows/commitments reflect the commitments of faith we make to our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, when we believe on Him and follow Him

V - vv 19-22: Naomi and Ruth return and arrive in Bethlehem

1/ **v 19: "So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem."**

- God is returning them to "the house of bread" – not just the bread of physical food, but more ... to the place where He had foreordained that our Redeemer would be born "in the fullness of time..."

2/ This is where they must be to establish the human family lineage to God's Christ / Messiah – who will come to redeem Israel AND the nations from our sins

- Luke 1.26
- Luke 2.1-7
- Matthew 2.1-6

3/ All Bethlehem was abuzz with Naomi's arrival – so glad to see her

- Naomi rebuked them for calling her by her name "Pleasant"
- She identified by the name "Mara" = 'bitter'

4/ Yes – Yahweh had afflicted her, but not to mistreat, abuse, diminish, or destroy her ... Yahweh had afflicted her to give her no choice but to come back to the place of covenant blessing – so He can begin filling her to the full with His MERCY [chesed – go back to III, 3/]

5/ v 21 becomes the theme sentence of chapter 1 – but it also sets in stark contrast what God is about to do for her – AND FOR US!

- there is also Ruth the Moabite [Gentile / 'nations/]
- coming to Bethlehem [house of bread] AND future birthplace of the Redeemer

6/ **"at the beginning barley harvest"** because God has timed it perfectly for her to need and meet Boaz ... who is God's foreordained "pre-enactment" of His Christ / our Messiah-Savior!

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson 3

Chapter 2: Fullness and Friendship

FLASHBACK: before we even get started on this lesson, I want to ‘flashback’ to some previous comments we have made about Moab and Moabites. The Writer names Moab or identifies Ruth as a Moabitess 13 times in this short story. I have told you before that the very mention of or reference to the name had a visceral ‘cringe-factor’ for Israelites. Let’s just refresh our minds how an Israelite would have associated the mention of this name:

1. **Genesis 19.30-38** > the Moabites descended from a sordid incestuous conception plot between Lot and his daughters following their fleeing burning Sodom
2. **Numbers 22-24** > Balak, king of Moab, is the one who hired Balaam to come and curse the Israelites when they arrived in his regions [but YHWH turned it into blessing...]
3. **Numbers 25** > when the cursing of the Israelites failed, Balaam then advised the king of Moab to seduce the men of Israel with their daughters | 24,000 Israelites died in the ensuing plague
4. **Deuteronomy 23.3-6** > at this same time, they refused to meet the Israelites with bread and water when they came out of Egypt into their regions – YHWH forbade them entrance into the assembly for ten generations
5. **Judges 3.12-14** > since the story of Ruth happened ‘when the judges ruled,’ the eighteen years of oppression from Eglon king of Moab would have been fresh in their memories

AND YET – YHWH loves Ruth and chooses her to be in the lineage and genealogy of His Messiah [Matthew 1.5-6] by redeeming her through marriage to Boaz [Ruth 4.13-22] – see chapter 1.22

We would do well to examine our own hearts and the ways we look at and evaluate other groups of people ... to see if we allow ourselves to entertain ‘cringe-factors’ toward any person or groups of persons that are contrary to the ways God sees them and evaluates them. See 1 Corinthians 6.9-11 & James 2.1-13 & Revelation 5.9-10.

Please keep in mind:

1. our focus and theme for this study is: **SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH**
2. we can’t – and we won’t try – to explore or expound every detail or lesson that is in this rich little story ... we want to focus on our main theme and search
3. we don’t know who the human Writer is of this book – but we do know who the Divine Author is: He is God, or more specifically ‘the Spirit of Christ’ [see **1 Peter 1.10-12**]
4. God knows where He is going – both in the orchestration and preparation of the unfolding events of this part of human history ... and also in the writing of the Story that will prepare us to recognize Christ when He comes ‘in the fullness of time’
5. therefore, what we are witnessing and studying is a ‘pre-enactment’ of the coming of Jesus Christ into our world:
 - 1) who He will be born from [human family and lineage];

- 2) what roles He will fulfill ['Redeemer'];
- 3) what ministry He will perform
 - a) save His people from their sins [including 'the nations' & Gentiles]
 - b) and give them 'rest'

6. let's see how God continues to 'pre-enact' The Story of Jesus in chapter 2

The Writer is pointing our attention to the sovereign and gracious Providence of God by setting up some contrasting themes:

1. **Emptiness and Fullness** – Naomi registers her bitter complaints against God in **ch 1.20: "I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty..."** – and yet she has no idea just how FULL the LORD is preparing to make her again.
2. **Famine and Harvest** – chapter 1 begins with famine in the land of Bethlehem [House of Bread] ... and now the LORD has given them grain again [**v. 6**] ... and the LORD has brought them back:
 - 1) to a specific place [Bethlehem],
 - 2) at a specific season of time [beginning of barley harvest],
 - 3) and we'll see how He directs their very physical steps to a specific field where Ruth and Boaz can meet...because...
 - a. Ruth and Boaz will have to meet
 - b. before Boaz can have the opportunity to redeem her and Naomi,
 - c. and they can marry,
 - d. and have a child,
 - e. who will be the grandfather of David,
 - f. who will be the royal progenitor of Christ

HOW DOES GOD MAKE THAT HAPPEN?

1. God prepares and introduces Boaz / v 1

- A. Note how the Writer sets up Boaz as a qualified 'redeemer' [because that is his Divinely-appointed role he is going to fulfill as a 'pre-enactment' motif for Christ, our Redeemer]
 - a. Naomi had a relative of her husband's
 - b. a worthy man [great in personal character and qualifying wealth]
 - c. of the clan of Elimelech [a necessary relationship]
 - d. whose name was Boaz

2. God puts in Ruth's heart and desires to assume responsibility to help provide for her and Naomi / v 2

- A. God had commanded and provided for the feeding of the poor, sojourners, widows, and orphans from the 'gleanings' of their harvests
 - **Leviticus 19.9-10; 23.22; Deuteronomy 24.19-22**
- B. More than that – God commanded them to treat the oppressed and the sojourners among them the same ways He treated them when they were in that same condition

➤ **Deuteronomy 10.12-22**

3. God directs Ruth's path that day to the field of His sovereignly-chosen 'redeemer' / v 3

A. Yes, 'she happened...' to come to this specific plot of harvest-field – but does anyone doubt God's sovereign direction of her steps and path?

➤ **Genesis 24.26-27; Proverbs 3.5-6**

B. Note also how the Writer reminds us of Boaz's relationship with Elimelech

4. God directs Boaz to visit this specific portion of his harvest-fields that day / vv 4-7

A. What does Boaz's greetings and interactions with his reapers say about his character and especially about his spiritual faith in YHWH?

a. Again, the Writer is pointing us to Boaz's personal faith and covenant loyalty to YHWH, the God of Israel.

B. Boaz's questions re: 'Whose young woman is this?' is only an acknowledgement that he doesn't recognize her from among the Bethlehem villagers and residents. "Whose family is she from? What family does she belong to?"

C. When the foreman associates her with Naomi, Boaz will immediately recognize her family connection – and he will identify with her, at least by association!

D. And, Boaz is very interested! His heart is drawn to Ruth and Naomi = he begins to exercise not only his public social responsibility, but more personally, a family responsibility toward Ruth and Naomi

5. God opens up Boaz's heart of responsibility, sympathy, compassion, and maybe even the beginnings of affection toward Ruth / vv 8-12

There are actually four conversations between Boaz and Ruth sub-set into this exchange:

(1) Boaz -> Ruth, vv 8-9

– Boaz appeals to Ruth to continue returning back to his fields to glean [with a subtle, implied commitment to see that she and Naomi are adequately **provided for...both in grain and water**]

– He also promises her **protection** by charging the young men not to touch or harass her

(2) Ruth -> Boaz, v 10

– Ruth expresses her humility, respect, and gratitude for Boaz's offers of hospitality and grace – she recognizes that she is a foreigner with no 'rights' other than those commanded by the law for social conduct, like gleaning.

– But, he is going way above and beyond merely what the law requires. He is showing her extreme grace!

(3) Boaz -> Ruth, vv 11-12

– Boaz recognizes not only her human and family love shown to her mother-in-law, Naomi, but also her profession of faith and commitment to YHWH, the God of Israel.

- He recognizes her as a sister in the faith, a fellow heir in the covenant, and a recipient of God’s grace!

(4) Ruth -> Boaz, v 13

- Ruth finally acknowledges her indebtedness to Boaz for his gracious favor –
- and, in addition to identifying herself as a ‘foreigner’ [v 10], she now also calls herself ‘your servant,’ though not one of his native-born, citizen-servants.

6. God moves Boaz even further to invite and accept Ruth into his own personal and intimate fellowship / vv 14-16

- He shares his own meal with her
- He personally serves her
- He feeds her until she is not just satisfied, but has leftovers to take home [NOTE how the ‘fullness’ theme continues to be drawn out]
- He commands his reapers to purposely pull out bundles of grain for her to add to her gleanings
- He commands his reapers to respect her and treat her graciously

Is not all this – and so much more – what Christ has given and done for us by His coming and in His Gospel? **See John 1.16**

7. God begins to reveal His sovereign mercies of grace to Naomi ... as she begins to recognize the unfolding of YHWH’s plan and provision of her redemption / vv 17-23

- A. When Naomi saw the exceeding generosity with which Ruth had been treated, she obviously wanted to know where and by whom this grace had been received
- Where did you glean today?
 - And where have you worked?
 - Blessed be the man who took notice of you!
- B. When Ruth names Boaz, Naomi can’t contain her excitement and enthusiasm – she immediately recognizes Boaz as well-qualified to be her ‘redeemer’ [go-el] – if only he will be willing!
- She blesses Boaz in the Name of YHWH
 - She recognizes his ‘chesed’ or covenant/steadfast love
 - She exclaims, “The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers!”
- C. Obviously, Naomi charges and encourages Ruth to continue to receive the benefits of Boaz’s gracious overtures of grace and provision
- D. **BOAZ’S EXCEEDINGLY GRACIOUS MERCIES RICHLY PROVIDED FOR NAOMI AND RUTH FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE HARVEST SEASONS!**

**But Naomi has yet other and more plans for the security of their futures to come!
And so does God!**

Stay tuned...!

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson 4

Chapter 3: Audacious Asking & Assured Acceptance

As we have been saying from the start of this short study in the Book of Ruth, we can't explore and expand on everything we could say – or would like to say – about what is going on in this story. What we have been saying from the get-go is that we will focus on SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH – because HE IS HERE!

We don't know who the human writer and narrator of this story was, but what we DO know is that “the Spirit of Christ Himself was in him” [to paraphrase 1 Peter 1.10-12]. Jesus Christ Himself is inspiring the human writer and narrator to ‘pre-enact’ what He Himself would do in generations to come – when He would come into our world through this very same ‘little town of Bethlehem’ to be our Redeemer [see Micah 5.2].

Not only would God's Redeemer come from the tribe of Judah and be born in the town of Bethlehem, but He would also be a direct royal descendent of King David.

Isaiah 11.10 – In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples – of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious.

Paul goes back to get this verse and writes it again in Romans 15.12 where he is exulting in God's forethought and fore-planning to bring His Redeemer into the world to save not just Israelites and Jews, but peoples from ALL the nations.

Romans 15.12 – And again Isaiah says, ‘The root of Jesse will come, even He who arises to rule the Gentiles; in Him will the Gentiles hope.’

NOW, what we are going to witness here in **Ruth, chapter 3**, is a picture of Jesus Christ committing to assume the role of Redeemer of His people and assuming the responsibility of redeeming us for Himself – to belong to Him!

Boaz is intentionally presented to us here as a pointer to Christ. He may not be a formal type of Christ [a ‘type’ must be formally recognized and specifically named as such in the New Testament], but Boaz is certainly a ‘motif’ or [as I like to call it] a ‘pre-enactment’ of Christ.

And we know that Boaz is a pre-enactment of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer because the writer/narrator repeatedly emphasizes that Boaz is ‘a near relative, a redeemer’ [see 2.20; 3.9; 4.4]

So, when we come here to **chapter 3**, we are going to witness Boaz's commitment to redeem Elimelech's estate for Naomi, and in so doing, he will also commit to marry Ruth and raise up a family in the name of Mahlon, Ruth's deceased husband. In this way, he will redeem their family from dying out [‘be cut off’ ch 4.10].

AND, by perpetuating Elimelech and Mahlon through Ruth, Boaz will become the great-grandfather of David – who is the human forefather and progenitor of Jesus Christ!

SO – HOW DOES BOAZ BECOME THE ‘REDEEMER’?

I’m going to give **chapter 3** the theme of *Audacious Asking* – because Ruth’s proposal to Boaz to marry her is one of the most *audacious askings* in all of Scripture!

And since Boaz is the ‘pre-enactment’ of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, then it is consistent with his character *to encourage audacious asking and agree to granting audacious requests!*

Jesus certainly did!

- Matthew 7.7-11 – ‘ask and you shall receive’
- Matthew 8.1-3 – “Lord, if you will, you can make me clean...” “I will...!”
- Mark 10.46-52 – To Bartimaeus: “What do you want me to do for you?”
- Matthew 15.21-28 – the Syrophoenician woman

So, what we’re going to do is work our way through Ruth chapter 3.

- Yes, we will focus on Boaz’s gracious consent to be Naomi’s and Ruth’s redeemer,
- but we will also focus on the audacity of Ruth’s way of asking him.

We are going to cast Ruth as a woman of great faith in her redeemer. And we want to learn to pray, ask, and expect great graces from our Redeemer just as Ruth did from hers.

I’m going to present us with five facets of Ruth’s faith in Boaz as they play out in the story – and then challenge us to act toward Christ, our Redeemer, with these same acts of faith.

Chapter 3 can be called Act 3 of this Drama of Redemption.

And Act 3 can be broken down into 3 scenes.

SCENE 1 begins in the house again...

SCENE 2 will go to the threshingfloor...

SCENE 3 will be back in the house

1/ GREAT FAITH IS INTENTIONAL | read vv 1-5

1. The *‘rest’* that Naomi wants to find for Ruth is the rest of a permanent family and home. They are still without their family property. For the past several weeks – maybe months – they have been living off of the gleanings Ruth has been bringing home from Boaz’s field. But, what about the future? For Ruth? For Naomi?
2. Boaz is, after all, a qualified close relative and redeemer, **ch 2.20**
3. Naomi proposes a daring plan: Ruth will go to the threshing floor and propose to Boaz that he marry her!
 - a. *wash yourself*
 - b. *anoint yourself* [with perfumed oils]

- c. ***put on a cloak-garment*** [this may have been an instruction to take off her former widow's / mourning garments and assume her place among the eligible women for marriage]
 - d. ***go to the threshing floor – but remain hidden until after the evening meal and festivities***
 - e. ***After Boaz retires, she is to go where he is lying down, remove the covers from the lower parts of his legs, and lie down beside his legs and feet***
4. Naomi is so confident that Boaz will comply with this proposal, that she tells Ruth: **“...he will tell you what to do.”**
 5. Ruth consents to carry out this plan in full: **“All that you say I will do.”**
- **You must take Christ at His word and ask Him for His grace!**
 - ***“Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!”***

2/ GREAT FAITH IS VULNERABLE | read vv 6-7

1. I don't know if we can even begin to recognize what a risk Ruth is taking here: *[see endnote at end of lesson]*
 - a. Moabite woman
 - b. runs the risk of being seen as a prostitute soliciting illicit services
 - c. runs the risk of being rejected
 - d. runs the risk of being publicly shamed and shunned for her improprieties
 2. But she casts herself upon the good character and 'mercy' of Boaz – believing that he will respect her need and her request
- **We live in abject dependence upon Jesus Christ, our Redeemer – but we believe in His mercy and grace! We have no one else to go to – we need none other!**
 - ***“All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and whoever comes to me shall not be cast out!”***

3/ GREAT FAITH IS INTIMATE & PERSONAL | read vv 8-9

1. Sometime during the night, Boaz was startled awake – could have been shivering from the night air / could have been delayed reactions to the movements at his feet
2. What he discovered was a woman sleeping at his feet! ***“Who are you!”***
 - a. Notice how the writer/narrator continues to cast everything in the ambience of darkness and secrecy: ***‘tonight’ / ‘do not make yourself known to the man’ / ‘at the end of the heap of grain’ / ‘she came softly’ / ‘at midnight’***
 - b. **This is not out in the open field in broad daylight; this is just the two of them with no one else even knowing or participating...**
 - c. **Faith is always intensely intimate and personal – a personal transaction of love and trust with Jesus Christ**
3. Ruth identifies herself by her name: ***“I am Ruth”***
 - a. she takes the place of a ***‘servant’*** – even a foreigner, not a citizen, not an employee – with no rights to request anything at all

4. And yet, she proposes to Boaz that he marry her! *“Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer!”*

- a. The ‘wings’ were the lower portions of his outer cloak
- b. This was an act of engagement to marry – to take to himself – to assume the responsibility to take care of her every need! *see Ezekiel 16.8-10*

- **Jesus Christ invites you into His own life – into His family – into His very heart!**
- ***“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God!”***

4/ GREAT FAITH IS GROUNDED IN COVENANT PROMISES | read vv 10-11

- **Faith is conscious, deliberate, intentional decision to trust God to do what He has promised to do!**

1. You have to recognize that everything that has been going on in this little story is grounded in God’s Word and in the laws He had given to Israel to govern their conduct – every aspect of their lifestyle and conduct: the gleaning / the rights of the redeemer to buy back the property of a close relative and restore it back to their original family
2. Ruth has already made her profession of faith in YHWH, the God of Israel | ***ch 1.16***
3. Boaz greeted his reapers and farmhands in the name of YHWH | ***ch 2.4***
4. Boaz had already recognized Ruth’s membership in their family of faith and her personal trust in YHWH | ***ch 2.12***
5. Boaz also commends Ruth and acknowledges that she has already proven her personal faith in YHWH and her commitment to obey and serve and follow Him by the ways she has taken care of her mother-in-law Naomi
6. So, Boaz accepts his personal responsibility under God’s law to marry Ruth and have children with her – to restore the family line she lost when Mahlon died!

5/ GREAT FAITH IS EFFECTIVE | read vv 12-17

The writer/narrator is deliberately crafting his words [under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit] to show us ***that God is the One who is doing through these faithful servants everything they are doing.***

1. **vv 12-13** So – the first response we get from Boaz is: “Of course! I will marry you and redeem Elimelech’s property and resume the family line of Mahlon! But, there is a redeemer who is closer to Naomi than I am. We’ll have to see if he wants to claim the right. If he does, I will have to honor the law and the custom and concede to him. But, if he doesn’t – as surely as YHWH lives and is faithful [and He is!], I WILL!”
2. **This is such a beautiful picture, pointer, and pre-enactment of Jesus Christ being willing to obey His Father to come to earth, be born as one of us so He could be like us and close to us – AND REDEEM US!**

- **except that, of course, in His case – He was the ONLY One qualified to be our Redeemer!**
- 3. **v 14** They were all up before it was light enough to be seen and recognized. Boaz was always careful and conscientious all through the transactions of the night to be a man of character, integrity, above-board – nothing was ever done that was indecent or inappropriate. He is committed to keeping it that way: ***“Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”***
- 4. **v 15** But Boaz is not going to send her home to Naomi without another abundant blessing. ***“Hold out your shawl...”*** and he filled it with as much of the threshed grain as Ruth could carry home for her and Naomi.
- 5. **vv 16-17** Naomi is waiting up for her: I really doubt she even slept all night long – wondering how the night was going? Will Boaz be willing to secure their future? Did she do the right thing sending Ruth out there to the threshing floor in the night with a bunch of men? [Remember: this was during the days of the Judges...]
- 6. Ruth gives Naomi her good report – and then shows her the bountiful gift Boaz has sent home with her for them
- 7. **NOTE again how the writer/narrator is crafting his words to show us that God had completely reversed their prospects for the future...**
 - when Naomi first came back to Bethlehem, her bitter complaint against YHWH was: “I went away full, and YHWH has brought me back empty!”
 - the writer puts it in Boaz’s mouth, “Don’t go back to your mother-in-law ***empty***-handed...” [same word]
- 8. ***God has done this! - and this was God’s intention and plan all along!***
- 9. ... and not only is He filling up their human and physical provisions, but He is also pre-enacting here how He will send our Redeemer into our world in the ***fulness*** of time and when He comes, He will be “***full*** of grace and truth!” -> see **ch 4.18-21**

Naomi concludes her celebration with her call to wait for Boaz to act. She knows he will be faithful to do all He can.

We know what our Redeemer has done: *“IT IS FINISHED!”*

Endnote see point ‘2/’ above: *From a natural perspective the desired response was actually the least likely to occur. What are the chances that Boaz will wake up and in his groggy state ... that he will respond favorably toward her, overlooking the irregularities of the situation:*

- a woman proposing to a man
- a younger person proposing to an older
- a field worker proposing to the field owner
- a poor servant proposing to the rich landlord
- an alien [Moabite] proposing to a native

and that, in fulfillment of Naomi’s words, he will give Ruth rational instructions concerning how to proceed? By this time Naomi’s faith is strong. She has confidence in Boaz’s integrity and apparently in the hidden hand of God to govern his reactions when he awakes. ~Daniel Block, pp 687, 692

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson 5

Chapter 4: Redemption & Restoration

As we have been saying from the start of this short study in the Book of Ruth, we can't explore and expand on everything we could say – or would like to say – about what is going on in this story. What we have been saying from the get-go is that we will focus on SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH – because HE IS HERE!

We don't know who the human writer and narrator of this story was, but what we DO know is that “the Spirit of Christ Himself was in him” [to paraphrase 1 Peter 1.10-12]. Jesus Christ Himself is inspiring the human writer and narrator to ‘pre-enact’ what He Himself would do in generations to come – when He would come into our world through this very same ‘little town of Bethlehem’ to be our Redeemer [see Micah 5.2].

Not only would God's Redeemer come from the tribe of Judah and be born in the town of Bethlehem, but He would also be a direct royal descendent of King David.

Isaiah 11.10 – In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples – of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious.

Paul goes back to get this verse and writes it again in Romans 15.12 where he is exulting in God's forethought and fore-planning to bring His Redeemer into the world to save not just Israelites and Jews, but peoples from ALL the nations.

Romans 15.12 – And again Isaiah says, ‘The root of Jesse will come, even He who arises to rule the Gentiles; in Him will the Gentiles hope.’

>>>>>>>>> † <<<<<<<<<<

Paul quotes Isaiah 59.20-21 in Romans 11.26-27 when he announces that Christ had come to fulfill all of God's OT promises and pre-enactments of our Redeemer:

...as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, He will banish ungodliness from Jacob”; “and this will be my covenant with them when I take away their sins.”

In chapter 4.1, Boaz makes his appearance at the town's gate – the place where civil and legal transactions were formalized – to accomplish redemption for Naomi, Ruth, and for Elimelech's and Mahlon's family name. When this formal, legal transaction has been made, Boaz can exclaim **“It is finished! – It has been paid in full! It is done!”**

Theme of chapter 4: REDEMPTION & RESTORATION

The central theme of REDEMPTION has been woven all throughout this short-story pre-enactment of the Gospel. The noun or verb form of *go-el* has been used at least 12 times during this narrative.

Now, in chapter 4, Boaz will do it. As chapter 3 concludes, the narrator is giving us a ‘teaser’ for the next act. Ruth has returned from the threshing floor where she has proposed to Boaz that he fulfill his role prescribed by the law as their *go-el/redeemer*.

“She [Naomi] replied, ‘Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today.’”

This is a pre-enactment of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer! Get the picture that God is inspiring and writing here to point us to Christ and to pre-enact what He will do for us when He comes!

Because...we have to see this! In this immediate transaction, Boaz is going to redeem [see chapter 4.9-10]:

- Elimelech and his family land and inheritance in Bethlehem
- Mahlon and his perpetuity of their family’s name and lineage
- Naomi and her future security and provision
- Ruth and her place in the family’s name and lineage
- **But, God is working through Boaz to also restore the family lineage through whom He has chosen, purposed, and planned to redeem us!**
 - Luke 1.67-75
 - Galatians 4.1-7
 - Hebrews 9.11-12
 - Ephesians 1.7-10
 - 1 Peter 1.17-21

A simple way to break down this chapter and flesh out the theme of **Redemption & Restoration** would be:

verses 1-11a: A legal transaction – blessing comes through a costly **redemption**

verses 11b-17: A series of blessings – **the restoration of the family’s land and lineage**

11b-12: the blessing of the people and elders in the gate on Boaz

13-17: the blessing of the women of the neighborhood on Naomi

verses 18-21: A pointer to the future and Christ



However, before we begin to explore this narrative and how Boaz pre-enacts, promises, and points to Christ, our Redeemer, it would be helpful to refresh our memories re: how God provided for *go-el/kinsman-redeemer and redemption* in His law.

God had provided for the perpetuity and continuation of two covenant blessings:

1. the family [lineage], and
2. their enjoyment of the Promised Land He had given them.

And so, if someone fell into need and either of these two covenant blessings were in jeopardy of being broken, a close family member was expected to volunteer to step up and step in to help – to become that needy family member’s *go-el/redeemer*. The noun *go-el* comes from the verb *galal = to redeem/deliver*.

Let's review a couple provisions:

1. **Leviticus 25.23-28** – if the family's property [which was their land-grant inheritance from YHWH Himself in the Promised Land, see v 23], had to be mortgaged to another member of their tribal clan, the *go-el* could redeem it [buy it back], regain possession of it for the original owner, and return it to the family.
2. **Deuteronomy 25.5-10** – this provision is called *Levirate marriage* from *levir* which is Hebrew for 'brother-in-law.' If a brother of a family dies without first fathering a son who will perpetuate and carry on the family name and lineage, then the next available unmarried brother [the widow's *levir/brother-in-law* will take her as his wife to father a son who will become the heir of the deceased brother to perpetuate his family name and lineage.

>>>>>>>>> † <<<<<<<<<<<

So – getting back to Ruth 4, **Redemption & Restoration**, here's how the legal transaction was 'finished'!

verses 1-11a: The legal transaction – blessing comes only through a costly **redemption**

1. Boaz makes good on his promise to Ruth just a few hours before [3.11-13]
 - a. **verse 1** - Boaz immediately makes his way to the 'gate' of the city as soon as it is daybreak – he goes from the threshing floor
 - i. The venue of the redemption transaction: the gate – this is the entrance into the walled city from the surrounding fields outside / town's elders & council members would convene and 'sit' here to conduct the town's legal civil and social matters
 - b. Notice the 5 repetitions of the word 'sit' – this was their formal legal posture
 - c. The narrator highlights and emphasizes how the nearer- *go-el* 'just happened' to be passing by at that very moment: "And behold!" [see also ch 2.3-4]
 - d. Boaz calls for his to come and sit down with him |
 - i. Boaz obviously knows his name – he is a relative – but he is keeping this transaction as impersonal as possible between the two of them
 - ii. "Friend" is actually too personal and friendly for this greeting; more like "Hey, you there!"
 - iii. the words the narrator uses makes him just a generic "Mr So-and-So"
 - iv. this unwilling *go-el* shall remain nameless forever
 - e. **verse 2** - Boaz seeks for a formal quorum of city elders | he may have had to go and find them | but he does, and they, too, are seated
 - f. All the legal parties are now present, seated, and ready for the transaction to be formalized
2. Boaz begins his first public, formal, legal proposal to the nearer-*go-el*
 - a. **verses 3-4** – Boaz presents the "whereas" conditions of the case...

- i. “Whereas Naomi is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech” – NOTE: Naomi didn’t have possession of the land they had mortgaged – but she is seeking a **go-el** to act on her behalf to recover and restore it to Elimelech
 - ii. “Whereas you are a nearer-**go-el** than I am, I thought I would honor YHWH’s law and give you first priority to make the redemption...”
 - b. We don’t know whether Boaz and the others who have gathered around to witness the **redemption transaction** were surprised or horrified by the nearer-**go-el’s** response – but he readily responded “**I will redeem it!**”
 - i. His thinking was that he would **redeem** Elimelech’s property – yes, he would have to take care of Naomi for as long as she lived – but since there were no male heirs, when she died, the land would be his.
3. **verse 5** - Boaz counters with the additional caveat: whoever **redeems** Elimelech’s land must also marry Ruth to raise up a son/heir to Elimelech’s dead heir, Mahlon – Ruth’s former husband.
- a. This is the “levirate” marriage provision we referenced above
 - b. He obviously saved this additional responsibility as a ‘rider’ or a ‘codicil’ in order to present a complication which he hoped the nearer-**go-el** would have to refuse
 - c. **verse 6** - It worked! Boaz probably knew him well enough to know that he was a shrewd landowner, farmer, and businessman. He couldn’t risk or jeopardize his profit and estate in order to fulfill his legal/moral responsibility to marry Ruth [and especially with her being a Moabitess!] in order to raise up and restore a relative’s family and lineage!
4. **verses 7-8 – the “exchange of the sandal” ceremony**
- a. as a formal recognition that he was reneging on his “levirate” responsibility and forfeiting his nearer-**go-el** claim to **redeem** Elimelech’s property, he took off his own sandal and gave it to Boaz – thus transferring the nearer-**go-el** right of **redemption** to Boaz
 - b. some historians/commentators believe this custom derived from JHWH’s promise to Joshua when they went into the Promised Land to possess it – see Joshua 1.3
 - c. **verse 9** - Boaz now ‘owned’ his right to **redeem** and claim Elimelech’s land...and assume the responsibility to provide and care for Naomi for the rest of her life...
 - d. **...and marry Ruth! and raise up a son to carry on the family name and lineage...**

> AND THIS IS JUST WHAT GOD HAD INTENDED ALL ALONG! <

Our next and final lesson will explore the pointers to Christ in verses 11b-21

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Lesson 6

Chapter 4.11b-22: Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies

We have now come to the end of this little short story. As we have been saying all along, our purpose in our study has not been to explore or comment on every detail. Volumes of books have been written about the riches that can be mined from this short biographical story. But our focus has been on SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH. And we have found pointers to Christ and pre-enactments of Christ's coming into our world to be our Redeemer in every chapter and scene.

But as I say – we have now come to the very last scenes. And they, too, are rich with **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies** of the Christ who is to come!

Maybe here in the final scenes of this drama, you might expect the story to be kind of 'winding down.' It's not 'winding down' at all. To the contrary, the **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies** pointing to Christ keep 'ratcheting up'! So that's what we will focus on here in this final lesson.

Keep in mind that we have been saying all along that this story is set in four acts, and each of the four acts has several scenes. Each of what we now have as four chapters is a separate act in the unfolding drama, and every act seems to have a distinct theme that helps to build the story. Here are the themes we have given the four acts:

- Chapter 1: Emptiness & Exile
- Chapter 2: Fullness & Friendship
- Chapter 3: Audacious Asking & Assuring Acceptance
- Chapter 4: Redemption & Restoration

In this final act in chapter 4, Boaz brings this drama of redemption to a crescendo consummation and completion. As I told you in our last lesson, in this his pre-enactment of the Gospel, Boaz could have exclaimed **“It is FINISHED! Your redemption has been PAID IN FULL! The redemption of your family's land [inheritance] has been accomplished! The restoration of your family's lineage and name has been performed! It is DONE!”**

All of this was done in such a way that it foreshadows the work of redemption that Jesus Christ would finish and accomplish “in the fullness of time” when He came into our world to die for our sins and redeem us back to God by His blood!

In fact, that was Boaz's public announcement that he made following the *go-el* transaction in chapter 4.9-10:

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. ¹⁰Also Ruth the Moabite, the

widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.”

So this is now where we want to pick up in the remaining scenes in chapter 4.

There will two remaining scenes and then the final genealogy. All of these **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies** are going to be pointers to Christ. That’s what we will highlight.

I’m calling them:

- **Prayers** because when you read the words “May the LORD...” what you are reading is a **prayer** they are praying to God to do this.
- **Promises** because what they are asking God to do in the lives of these saints is what God had already **promised** He would do.
- **Prophecies** because they were not aware of how **prophetic** they were speaking. But we know that God was speaking His own **prophetic** words and purposes through them. God was **pre-enacting** and **pre-announcing** what He would do 1000+ years later when He would send Christ into the world to be our anointed and appointed Redeemer!

Scene 1: at the gate of Bethlehem where the redemption transaction was publicly witnessed. The speakers are the elders and the townspeople who had gathered to witness the redemption transaction. They will make three separate statements in their **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies**.

Scene 2: nine months later, presumably in the home of Boaz, Ruth, Naomi, and now little Obed. The speakers are the neighboring women who love Naomi and have come to celebrate this birth with her and bless her in the name of the LORD with their **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies**.

Scene 3: the genealogy. This, too, is a scene in the sense that the Writer/Narrator will give us a flashback of history from Perez to David. This, too, will be included in the **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies** because in this genealogy, the human Writer/Narrator is revealing to us why he is writing this historical record. Obviously, he is writing this Book of Ruth after David had been anointed and inaugurated as Israel’s King. Otherwise, Naomi, Ruth, Boaz, and Obed would have been just among the other millions of common people Israelites who lived and died unnamed during all these generations. But now that David is known, they, too, become part of the public record as his predecessors. They are King David’s lineage and family tree. They are King David’s ‘credentials’ as the rightful king of Israel – being a direct descendent of the royal tribe, the tribe of Judah.

Genesis 49.8-10: “Judah, your brothers shall praise you; your hand shall be on the neck of your enemies; your father's sons shall bow down before you. 9 Judah is a lion's cub; from the prey, my son, you have gone up. He stooped

down; he crouched as a lion and as a lioness; who dares rouse him? 10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.”

Just to give you one prominent key how this genealogy doesn't just stop with David [as it does here in this text and record], but it actually **Promises & Prophecies** of Christ who will come in “the fullness of time,” let me quote from Paul in **Acts 13.22-23**:

And when He [God] had removed him [Saul], He raised up David to be their king, of whom He testified and said, ‘I have found in David the son of Jesse a man after my heart, who will do all my will.’ 23 Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as He promised.

So now, let's see how these **Prayers, Promises, & Prophecies** were announced:

Scene 1 – Ruth 4.11b-12 – city elders and townspeople

- ***May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel.***
 1. Remember: Ruth had been Mahlon's wife for the 10 years they had been in Moab, and was barren, childless.
 2. Rachel also was barren until the LORD opened her womb and gave her Joseph and later Benjamin.
 3. They are praying that Ruth may become as fruitful as Rachel and Leah, who [along with their handmaids Bilhah and Zilpah gave birth to the 12 sons who became fathers of the 12 tribes of Israel [Genesis 29-30]
- ***May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,***
 1. Literally, “*May your noble acts be remembered, and may your name live on in perpetuity through the offspring who will be born to you and bear your name for generations to come...*”
 2. Just think of the implications of that prayer in terms of Matthew 1.1-5
- ***...and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman.”***
 1. This reference is to the tawdry story of Genesis 38. Judah is the father of their tribe, the royal tribe – from whom would be born David...and Jesus!
 2. But Perez was born to the unwitting levirate [incestuous] marriage that his daughter-in-law, Tamar, deceived and seduced him into.
 3. The only similarities between these stories is that both Judah and Boaz bore their sons through a levirate union.

Scene 2 – Ruth 4.13-17 – neighbor women, friends of Naomi

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

The redemption had been consummated. Now the marriage had been consummated also.

The LORD gave conception and the birth of a baby boy – to this formerly barren / childless foreign Moabite woman – who had professed her faith in Yahweh the God of Israel [see ch 1.15-17 & 2.12]

- **Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer...”**
 1. All credit, recognition, and praise is given to Yahweh who has given Naomi this little *go-el* - this baby boy will save her from loneliness, destitution, poverty, and the extinction of her family and name
 2. **...and God will save us all from our sins in generations to come through Christ who will be born from this little baby’s lineage!**
- **and may his name be renowned in Israel!**
 1. As the elders and townspeople had prayed for Boaz [v 11], may this baby boy’s name also be called, not just in Bethlehem, but in Israel!
 2. **Jesus’s Name will not only be called in Israel, but God will give Him the Name that is above every name!** [see Matthew 1.21 & Philippians 2.9-10 & Acts 2.36, & others...]
- **He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age...**
 1. This word ‘restorer’ is the same word the Narrator used 12 times as ‘turn,’ ‘turn back,’ ‘return’ etc as he was showing us there how God was ‘turning’ Naomi’s whole life fortunes from emptiness to fullness, from bitterness to blessing
 2. This baby boy *go-el* is going to restore her very life to her and take care of her in her old age – for as long as she needs to be taken care of.
- **...for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”**
 1. Although love is shown in so many persons and so many ways in this redemption romance, this is the only time the word ‘love’ is mentioned. And it is Ruth’s love for her mother-in-law Naomi
 2. In the Hebrew culture, seven sons was considered to be the ideal family... Yahweh had given and restored to Naomi more than the ideal of family completeness and fullness in Ruth and her baby boy.
 3. Read Ephesians 1.1-14 in the light of this **promise and prophecy** – how many parallels of promises that God has given us in Christ can you find?

¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. ¹⁷ And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, “A son has been born to Naomi.” They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, ¹⁹ Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, ²⁰ Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, ²¹ Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, ²² Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David. *~This prophetic genealogy is repeated in Matthew 1.1-5*

***Of this man's offspring God has brought to Israel a Savior, Jesus, as he promised.
~Acts 13.23***