Notes & Commentary from Classes Conducted at
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Preface

Blessings upon you, people of the most high God! What an awesome little book this is! Once you dig past the surface, there are wonderful spiritual nuggets for us to glean. I hope this study encourages you to dig deeper into the Word of God.

Pastor Maurice A. West
THE LEGAL DISCLAIMERS

There will be various translations of the Scriptures used in our study. If we depart from the King James Version, which will be our standard, what follows are the typical translations used:

- **NKJV** – Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

At various times in this study, you may also find the following designations referring to reference material used to assist in putting together this study. Direct quotations will be shown in italicized text.

- `{Adam Clarke}` Adam Clarke’s Commentary on the Whole Bible
- `{David Guzik}` Pastor David Guzik. Enduring Word Ministries
- `{JF&B}` The Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary
- `{Matthew Henry}` Matthew Henry’s Commentary on the Whole Bible in One Volume
- `{Dake}` Dake’s Annotated Reference Bible

If other references, commentators, Internet sources, or Bible translations are used they will be identified in the text.

INTRODUCTION

**WRITER:** We have come to one of the most beautiful books of the Bible. In his “Introduction to the Book of Ruth”, Jack Zavada, a product of Illinois State University and yet a resident of Illinois, states {http://christianity.about.com/od/oldtestamentbooks/a/Book-Of-Ruth.htm} “The book of Ruth is one of the most moving accounts in the Bible, a story of love and loyalty that is a stark contrast to today’s cynical, throwaway society. This short book, only four chapters, shows how God uses people in amazing ways.” And as beautiful and moving as this book is, there is no agreement on who wrote it. There is agreement that the main character, Ruth, did NOT write it.


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- {The Catholic Encyclopedia – http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/13276a.htm} “The Book of Ruth is anonymous, for the name which it bears as its title has never been regarded otherwise than that of the chief actor in the events recorded. The name of the author of the book of Ruth is unknown, and so is also the precise date of its composition. The work, however, was most likely written before the Babylonian exile.” This is probably the best answer. Too often we try to force an answer when a simple, “I don’t know” would suffice.

- {http://www.biblestudytools.com/ruth/} “The author is unknown. Jewish tradition points to Samuel, but it is unlikely that he is the author because the mention of David (4:17,22) implies a later date. Further, the literary style of Hebrew used in Ruth suggests that it was written during the period of the monarchy.” The verses referenced point out that Ruth was the ancestor of David at a time when his name was prominent. However, Samuel died before David became king. But another could have added these few verses as an addendum.

- {Adam Clarke} “As to the author, he is as uncertain as the time. It has been attributed to Hezekiah, to Ezra, and to Samuel; and it is most likely that the author of the two books of Samuel was also the writer of this little book, as it seems necessary to complete his plan of the history of David.”

- {Dake} “[The author was] perhaps Samuel or Isaiah, to show the ancestry of David.”

So in summary, we don’t know and we can only speculate that Ezra, Samuel, or someone else wrote this book. Though knowing the author adds credibility to this book, it is still considered to be inspired by God, which is why it is included in the Bible.

DATE: Since we don’t know who wrote Ruth, it would be impossible to figure out when it was written. Dake takes the view that the final copy was an iterative process that started almost 1,000 years before it’s final version. But for all of his specifics going back over 3,000 years ago, it still says that there is no firm date.

- {Dake} Written in Palestine in its original form, as a record in Israel, between 1600-1500 B.C., but in its present form perhaps by Samuel between 1163-1123 B.C., or by Isaiah 743-683 B.C.

STATISTICS: {Dake} The Book of Ruth is the 8th book of the Bible. It contains 4 chapters and 85 verses. It is the first book of the Bible without a prophecy or any particular message from God by a prophet to Israel.

OTHER THOUGHTS: This is the first of two books in the Bible named after a woman (the other is Esther). The main character in this book is a Gentile who married two Hebrews while the main character in Esther is a Hebrew who married a Gentile.
AUTHOR’S NOTE: Throughout the text, if necessary, I will add what I call “SAINTS’ PRINCIPLES” (key themes directed to all Christians) and “LEADERSHIP PRINCIPLES” (key themes directed primarily to church leaders especially pastors). The intention of these principles is to point out truths, strictly from my point of view, based on something in the text.
Chapter 1

We are introduced to a family moving out of the will of God in an attempt to get away from God’s judgment. Their move proves to be tragic and only one of the four that left will return but she will return with the main character of this book, Ruth.

THE FAMILY MOVES OUT OF THE WILL OF GOD

I 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 Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. NLT In the days when the judges ruled in Israel, a severe famine came upon the land. So a man from Bethlehem in Judah left his home and went to live in the country of Moab, taking his wife and two sons with him. The timing, location, main characters, and the setting are all revealed in this first verse.

TIMING: This took place during the time of the judges, which began in the book by the same name and ended with Samuel. According to David Malick, a writer from Bible.org, “[The time of the] Judges lasts for 300 years from 1390-1090 when Saul began to reign.” Samuel, even though he lived after the Book of Judges, was actually the last judge. (1 Samuel 7:15-17) We don’t know where this story fits within that 300 year period but since Boaz, a person we will be introduced to in Chapter 2, is the son of Salmon and Rahab the Harlot (see Joshua 2; Matthew 1:5), it may be before the halfway mark of that period or about 1,500 years before Christ. This is close to the date established by Dake in our introduction.

LOCATION: There are two key locations in this book: Bethlehem, a town in the land of Judah, and Moab, a neighboring country. The journey from Bethlehem to Moab was about 60 miles so it would have taken the family 2-3 days to get there on foot and perhaps longer if they were physically challenged as a result of the famine. However, keep this in mind – it was not a long journey. Bethlehem has a rich history as the birthplace of David and the Lord Jesus and, prior to that, as the location of the tomb of Jacob’s wife, Rachel. The Catholic Encyclopedia says this about Bethlehem, “[It] is situated five miles south of Jerusalem...in the midst of a most beautiful country. At an altitude of 2,350 feet...the land of Moab is visible in the southeast.”

The country of Moab is important in the text because of its sordid history and the ongoing disputes Israel had with this country. I’ll take some time with this because we need to understand that the move this family is making is OUT of the will of God. Let’s look at a few
THE BOOK OF RUTH

Scriptures to understand their history and why this man is making a stupid move. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Any decision or move made OUTSIDE of the will of God is stupid no matter the reason or intent.

- **Genesis 19:36-37** Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father. 37 And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same is the father of the Moabites unto this day. The Moabites originated from the incestuous relationship of Lot, the nephew of Abraham, and his daughters. Thus the Moabites were descendents of Terah, Abraham’s father, and, therefore, close relatives of the Hebrew people. Though their origin was bad, that doesn’t make the children bad but they chose to go in a direction against God.

- **Numbers 25:1-3** Message Bible While Israel was camped at Shittim (Acacia Grove), the men began to have sex with the Moabite women. It started when the women invited the men to their sex-and-religion worship. They ate together and then worshiped their gods. Israel ended up joining in the worship of the Baal of Peor. God was furious, his anger blazing out against Israel. After Balak, the king of Moab, had hired Balaam to curse God’s people in Numbers 22-24, and this was unsuccessful, Balaam counseled the Moabites to attack Israel cunningly through their religious worship (Numbers 31:16; Revelation 2:14).

- **Deuteronomy 23:3-6** NLT No Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants for ten generations may be admitted to the assembly of the Lord. 4 These nations did not welcome you with food and water when you came out of Egypt. Instead, they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in distant Aram-naharaim to curse you. 5 But the Lord your God refused to listen to Balaam. He turned the intended curse into a blessing because the Lord your God loves you. 6 As long as you live, you must never promote the welfare and prosperity of the Ammonites or Moabites. This is the key verse. The Moabites and their companions, by Lot’s incest, the Ammonites, were not to be admitted to the congregation of Israel forever (this is the meaning of “for ten generations”) because of their treatment of Israel during the wanderings. This is a big issue! Then how did Ruth, the Moabite, get in the genealogy of Christ? Matthew Henry has an explanation but I’m not sure it bears out. {Matthew Henry} “With the daughters of these nations (though out of the nations of Canaan), it should seem, the men of Israel might marry, if they were completely proselyted to the Jewish religion; but with the men of these nations the daughters of Israel might not marry, nor could the men be naturalized otherwise than as here provided.” That’s a nice explanation but I’d like to think that the heart of God was moved by the character of Ruth.

**MAIN CHARACTERS:** We won’t receive their names until the next verse but, for now, it’s just a man, his wife, and his two sons.
SETTING: Israel is under a time of famine but sixty miles away there is no famine. Doesn’t that seem odd? It’s probably because Israel was under judgment at this time. {William J. Hocking – www.stempublishing.com} “The reference in the opening sentence of the Book to famine in the land is itself suggestive of the degenerate state of the chosen people. In their case, famine was not a mere physical contingency, but a mark of divine displeasure. The land which Jehovah had bestowed upon the children of Israel was ‘a land that floweth with milk and honey’ — milk from well-fed flocks and herds, and honey from luxuriant vegetation. A threat of starvation in such a fertile land implied that the chastisement of God had fallen upon the tribes because they had neglected His worship and transgressed His laws. And that for this reason God withheld rain from heaven they could have learned from the words of Moses (Deut. 11:8-15). At any rate, we read here, ‘And it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled (judged) that there was a famine in the land’ (ver. 1). The physical fact is stated, but not its moral cause.”

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. So here are our characters but of them, only one will survive to return from this trip. Elimelech focused on the prosperity of his fields versus the prosperity of his soul. Judgment had come to Israel. In the past, those that remained true to God were able to survive and thrive in these times (see Exodus 10:22-23). Instead, Elimelech left the land of promise to go to a land under a curse. He’s looking at the natural and not the spiritual. Deuteronomy 11:11-12 NKJV But the land which you cross over to possess is a land of hills and valleys, which drinks water from the rain of heaven, 12 a land for which the Lord your God cares; the eyes of the Lord your God are always on it, from the beginning of the year to the very end of the year. This is what Elimelech left because he either refused to, or didn’t understand how to, repent. Now the curse on Israel follows him as he goes into a cursed land. SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: When there’s a crisis in the land, it’s not time to move, it’s time to pray. Moving only takes the crisis with you especially if you are part of the situation. Matthew Henry powerfully adds, “It is an evidence of a discontented, distrustful, unstable spirit, to be weary of the place in which God hath set us, and to be for leaving it immediately whenever we meet with any uneasiness or inconvenience in it.” This was Elimelech.

TRAGEDY IN MOAB
3 And Elimelech Naomi’s husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. Proverbs 14:12 NKJV There is a way that seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death. This move seemed good to Elimelech but it did not turn out as he planned.

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. Elimelech may not have been a spiritual man because it appears that he did not impart into his sons the importance of
fidelity toward God and the teachings of the Law of Moses when it comes to women who were not of Jewish descent. Either that or they chose to openly rebel from his teachings after his death. Since we know the end of the story we tend to excuse these actions but that was strictly the mercy of God directed toward the character of Ruth. Now they have stayed in Moab so long that they’ve become comfortable. (Did they also become comfortable with Moab’s heathen worship – the worship that caused so many of Israel to die in Numbers 25?) However, God is going to shake up this nest and move them back to where they’re supposed to be. {David Guzik} “This was not in obedience to God; God commanded the Israelites to not marry among the pagan nations surrounding them.”

5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. The commentators, Hebrew scholars, and even some Old Testament interpretations say that Elimelech was judged for coming into this land and his sons were judged for marrying “strange women”. That would be a simplistic way to look at this. But more importantly, there are now three childless widows. {David Guzik} “To be a childless widow was to be among the lowest, most disadvantaged classes in the ancient world. There was no one to support you, and you had to live on the generosity of strangers. Naomi had no family in Moab, and no one else to help her. It was a desperate situation.” But the heart of God is toward the widow – James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and WIDOWS in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

| SIDE ROAD: Hebrews 3:10 NKJV | Therefore I was angry with that generation, And said, ‘They always go astray in their heart, And THEY HAVE NOT KNOWN MY WAYS.’ I wonder if we really know the “ways” of God when we so casually proclaim that the death of these three men was God’s judgment? We say it with an “oh, well” attitude. Knowing God’s commands is necessary and a prerequisite to knowing God’s ways. The “ways” of God are how He does things and what’s really in His heart. Here is His heart toward these occurrences: Ezekiel 33:11a Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Since the heart of God could no longer tolerate their wickedness and He governed even Himself by the words of His Law, His heart will now turn toward a Moabite woman whose heart will be to Him. |

| NAOMI LEAVES MOAB | 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. NLT Then Naomi heard in Moab that the Lord had blessed his people in Judah by giving them good crops again. So Naomi and her daughters-in-law got ready to leave Moab to return to her homeland. Naomi had a mind to get things straightened out with God at least in getting her place of residence right. I commend her for doing what so many today do not do. She decided to go back. People make mistakes and make wrong moves but instead of |
repenting they will either make another bad move or try to fix the bad situation that they’re in. {David Guzik} “Naomi could have stayed in Moab all of her life wishing things were different, but she did something to receive what God had to give her.”

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. The daughters-in-law felt compelled to go with their mother-in-law even though they were not from Judah and may have never been there because of their great love for her. There was another side of Naomi that greatly impacted these two women.

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. Message Bible After a short while on the road, Naomi told her two daughters-in-law, “Go back. Go home and live with your mothers. And may God treat you as graciously as you treated your deceased husbands and me.

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. Message Bible May God give each of you a new home and a new husband!” She kissed them and they cried openly. What love is exhibited in these two verses! There is the love that Naomi has for her daughters-in-law because of their kindness to her and their behavior toward her sons. She blessed them and encouraged them to remarry. There is also the love that they have toward her for when she dismissed them back to Moab, there was a great emotional outcry.

10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people. These women were not so willing to let Naomi go. Naomi had obviously been a powerful influence on their lives.

Saints’ Principle: May the Lord grant that every Christian mother-in-law and father-in-law make this kind of impact on their “inherited” children!

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? {JF&B} “This alludes to the ancient custom (Gen. 38:26) afterwards expressly sanctioned by the Law of Moses (Dt. 25:5), which required a younger son to marry the widow of his deceased brother.”

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;

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. {JF&B} “That Naomi should dissuade her daughters-in-law so strongly from accompanying her to the land of Israel may appear strange. But it was the wisest and most prudent course for her to adopt: first, because they might be influenced by hopes which
could not be realized; second, because they might be led, under temporary excitement, to take a step they might afterwards regret; and, third, because the sincerity and strength of their conversion to the true religion, which she had taught them, would be thoroughly tested.”

There is something at the close of this verse that points to the spirit of Naomi. She looked at her affliction as punishment from God. David Guzik says that if she had been bitter against God, she would have gone further AWAY from Israel. Perhaps, but in the midst of this, she never acknowledged her own role in the things she has suffered, i.e., moving out of the will of God.

14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. NLT And again they wept together, and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law good-bye. But Ruth clung tightly to Naomi. Apparently, these final words of Naomi struck a nerve with Orpah and she turned back to Moab. Was it the statement that the hand of the Lord was against her or that there were no more sons in her? We don’t know but she made a decision, a bad decision, to return to Moab. {Matthew Henry} “Orpah’s kiss showed she had an affection for Naomi and was loath to part from her; yet she did not love her well enough to leave her country for her sake. Thus many have a value and affection for Christ, and yet come short of salvation by him, because they cannot find in their hearts to forsake other things for him. They love him and yet leave him, because they do not love him enough, but love other things better.”

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. {David Guzik} “It wasn’t that Naomi didn’t want Ruth to come, but she didn’t want a fair weather friend either.” Naomi’s life had been filled with enough trouble without taking on someone who may not be true to her. She also didn’t need the added trauma of bringing a Gentile into the midst of Israel and especially one from Moab.

RUTH’S CONSECRATION TO GOD, TO GOD’S PEOPLE, & TO NAOMI

SIDE ROAD: Everything prior to this verse was a sad story but not worthy of being part of the Holy Text. Unfortunately, these types of sad events happen almost daily. But the next two verses turn the story completely and change the course of the rest of this book and, ultimately, the rest of Jewish and Christian history.

16 And Ruth said, Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: NLT But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be 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. NLT Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”
Ruth made a declaration and commitment to Naomi that many people don’t even make to God or in marriage:

1. Don’t ask me to leave you because I won’t;
2. Don’t ask me to go back to Moab because I won’t;
3. Wherever you go, I will go;
4. Wherever you live, I will live;
5. Your people (Israel) are now my people – I renounce my Moabite roots;
6. Your God is now my God – I renounce my Moabite gods;
7. Where you die, I will die;
8. Where you are buried, I will be buried.

Then she sealed this declaration by putting it in the hands of God for severe punishment if anything but death separated her from Naomi. {David Guzik} “Naomi’s relationship with God made an impact on Ruth. This is striking, because Naomi did not have an easy life. She had been widowed, had lost both her sons, and believed that she had caused each calamity by her disobedience. Yet she still honored and loved the LORD. People should be able to look at your life, just as Ruth looked at Naomi’s, and say ‘I want your God to be my God.’ Your trust in God, and turning towards Him in tough times, will often be the thing that draws others to the LORD.” Remember, she had to really press the other daughter-in-law to go back to Moab. Naomi had some wonderful characteristics that really resonated with these two women, especially Ruth.

18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her. {Charles H. Spurgeon} “Ah! You will never win any soul to the right by a compromise with the wrong. It is decision for Christ and his truth that has the greatest power in the family, and the greatest power in the world, too.” Naomi had lived over ten years in Moab in compromise. She probably often mentioned the fact that she knew she was out of the will of God. However, when she made up her mind to turn back and make a stand, this made an impression on Ruth.

NAOMI RETURNS TO BETHLEHEM
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? NKJV

Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” (Matthew Henry says that the women of the city were the ones to make this statement because the word “they” is feminine in the original text. The New King James Version agrees with this.) Though over ten years has passed, Bethlehem was excited about the return of Naomi. Dake speculates that the family was prominent and well liked. But the last three words spoken by the women could be words of shock or words of accusation.

{Matthew Henry} “And they said, Is this Naomi? Those with whom she had formerly been intimate were surprised to see her in this condition; she was so much broken and altered with
her afflictions that they could scarcely believe their own eyes, nor think that this was the same person whom they had formerly seen, so fresh, and fair, and gay.

Is this Naomi? So unlike is the rose when it is withered to what it was when it was blooming. What a poor figure does Naomi make now, compared with what she made in her prosperity! If any asked this question in contempt, upbraiding her with her miseries (‘is this she that could not be content to fare as her neighbors did, but must ramble to a strange country? see what she has got by it!’), their temper was very base and sordid. Nothing more barbarous than to triumph over those that are fallen. But we may suppose that the generality asked it in compassion and commiseration: ‘Is this she that lived so plentifully, and kept so good a house, and was so charitable to the poor? How has the gold become dim!’

‘Is this Naomi? One would not take it to be the same person.’ God, by his grace, fit us for all such changes, especially the great change!”

20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. Amplified Bible And she said to them, Call me not Naomi [pleasant]; call me Mara [bitter], for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I added the Amplified because it brings out the meaning of her name (Naomi – pleasant) versus what she called herself, (Mara – bitter). As in verse 13, Naomi again points to God as the source of her bitterness with no thought of her role in getting to this point. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: Deuteronomy 28** clearly points out the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience. Had obedience been the way of Elimelech, he would have never left Israel.

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? Has Naomi become a bitter, old woman? For the third and fourth times, she points her finger at God and offers no words of repentance or sorrow for sin. God did not pick her out for trauma. Her trauma began when disobedience appeared. And even if she had been completely obedient, God is the King and we are in His hands.

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. For the first time, Ruth is identified as a foreigner and, in particular, a foreigner from a country hated by Israel. In spite of this and in spite of Naomi’s accusations, God is about to bless in this situation because of the consecration of Ruth. Even the timing of their return worked in their favor, as we’ll see in chapters to come. {Adam Clarke} “This was in the beginning of spring, for the barley harvest began immediately after the Passover, and that feast was held on the 15th of the month Nisan, which corresponds nearly with our March.”
Chapter 2

This chapter is so remarkably more pleasant than the prior chapter because not only is Naomi now in the will of God but Ruth has joined her looking to please Him. Because of this, she will see favor beyond our understanding but it goes back to her declaration in the prior chapter. When God is pleased with us, He shows it with His favor.

**BOAZ COMES ON THE SCENE**

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. *Message Bible* It so happened that Naomi had a relative by marriage, a man prominent and rich, connected with Elimelech’s family. His name was Boaz. This obscure verse points to a relative, by marriage, of Naomi’s but, equally as important, it points to the favor bestowed on those that did not run during the hard times. In the midst of hard times, Boaz came under the blessing of God. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** {David Guzik} “Sometimes we justify wrong choices because of difficult circumstances. But God will strengthen us, and bless us, to make the right choice, even in difficult circumstances.”

The other notable point in this verse is the introduction of Boaz. Since Boaz was a relative of Elimelech, he’s probably older than Ruth but not necessarily a peer of Naomi. At this point, we know three things about him: we know his name; we know he’s very wealthy; and we know that he’s a relative of Elimelech.

**SIDE ROAD:** I often hear single women speaking about waiting on their “Boaz”. Perhaps their focus is on his wealth and his kindness to Ruth, which we’ll soon see. I wonder though how they would behave if “Boaz” was significantly older than they?

**GOD’S FAVOR WORKS IN WHAT WE WOULD CALL A “COINCIDENCE”**

2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. *NLT* One day Ruth the Moabitite said to Naomi, “Let me go out into the harvest fields to pick up the stalks of grain left behind by anyone who is kind enough to let me do it.” Naomi replied, “All right, my daughter, go ahead.” The word “glean” means {www.Dictionary.com} “to gather (the useful remnants of a crop) from the field after harvesting”. God had made provision for the poor, the widow, the fatherless, and even poor foreigners living in Israel by making sure that the farmers of that day did not harvest their fields bare (see Leviticus 19:9-10 and Deuteronomy 24:19). {Adam Clarke} “…she purposed to go out where they were now reaping, and glean after any person who might permit her, or use her in a friendly manner. The words seem to intimate that, notwithstanding the Law of Moses, the gleaners might be prevented by the owner of the field.” Even in that day, there were those whose love of possessions was greater than their love of God so they would disobey.

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. *NLT* So
Ruth went out to gather grain behind the harvesters. And as it happened, she found herself working in a field that belonged to Boaz, the relative of her father-in-law, Elimelech. Would you call this a “coincidence” or the hand of God? Your answer reveals your level of spirituality and your grasp of the power of God.

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. According to Dake, this was a common greeting of that day but there appears to be more here. {David Guzik} “This shows us something of the heart and character of Boaz. Apparently, his workers loved him and had a good relationship with him. You can often tell the real character of a man in authority by seeing how he relates to his staff and by how they think of him.” Now we add to the résumé of Boaz that he treated his workers well and they loved him in return.

5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? Harvest time was a busy period and, as a man that had much business to attend to, Boaz had a “servant supervisor” or “steward” whose job it was to act in his stead in the field. This man’s role was to be {JF&B} “an overseer whose special duty was to superintend the operations in the field, to supply provision to the reapers, and pay them for their labor in the evening.” As such, this man needed to not only know his workers but also those that gleaned behind them so that all would go smoothly with the harvest.

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: 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. NLT She asked me this morning if she could gather grain behind the harvesters. She has been hard at work ever since, except for a few minutes’ rest in the shelter. What if Ruth had been a surly type and didn’t ask permission? What if she didn’t understand that she was the “talk of the town” and that any bad behavior would be judged harshly? If this had been her, we might be talking about someone else in this book. Proverbs 18:16 Amplified Bible A man’s gift makes room for him and brings him before great men. Or, in this case, a woman’s gift of good manners.

**BOAZ’S COMMAND TO RUTH**

8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearest thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: NLT Boaz went over and said to Ruth, “Listen, my daughter. Stay right here with us when you gather grain; don’t go to any other fields. Stay right behind the young women working in my field.

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. NLT See which part of the field they
are harvesting, and then follow them. I have warned the young men not to treat you roughly. And when you are thirsty, help yourself to the water they have drawn from the well. This was a tremendous blessing that Ruth received. She not only had a place of gleaning, she also had protection and provision while gleaning. Boaz is showing the example of the model husband before that time arrives. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Ladies, don’t expect him to be “Boaz” after marriage if he wasn’t “Boaz” before.

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 shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? Naomi had obviously instructed Ruth on the negative aspects of following her back to Israel, which included that she would be viewed as a “stranger” or foreigner and, more importantly, one from that dreaded land of Moab. Ruth understood this and followed Naomi anyway. But now to be the recipient of such favor was a lot for her to grasp. But her own actions opened the door for this, which we’ll see in the next verse.

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. Amplified Bible And Boaz said to her, I have been made fully aware of all you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and mother and the land of your birth and have come to a people unknown to you before. Our actions follow us later in life. Ruth was rewarded for her faithfulness quickly while others may have to wait. But God is faithful and He will come through! This is a principle that follows us into the New Testament: **Hebrews 6:10**

Amplified Bible For God is not unrighteous to forget or overlook your labor and the love which you have shown for His name’s sake in ministering to the needs of the saints (His own consecrated people), as you still do.

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. {C. H. Spurgeon} “Observe that he saluted her with words of tender encouragement; for this is precisely what I want all the elder Christians among you to do to those who are the counterparts of Ruth. . . . I want you to make a point of looking out the young converts, and speaking to them goodly words, and comfortable words, whereby they may be cheered and strengthened.”

13 Then she said, Let me find favor 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. NIV “May I continue to find favor in your eyes, my lord,” she said. “You have put me at ease by speaking kindly to your servant—though I do not have the standing of one of your servants.” Ruth was a woman with a significant positive character.
She showed this earlier in her commitment to Naomi and her renouncing the life of Moab. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Be careful to not generalize and show prejudice to those that do not yet know the Lord. They may have the character of Ruth and they’re just waiting for one to introduce them to “a better way”.

**SIDE ROAD:** Boaz was attracted to Ruth. We haven’t seen anything so far that says that Ruth was beautiful or attractive. No, what’s attracting Boaz is her character and determination to live for the Lord.

**BOAZ SHOWS KINDNESS TO RUTH**

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.  

**NLT** At mealtime Boaz called to her, “Come over here, and help yourself to some food. You can dip your bread in the sour wine.” So she sat with his harvesters, and Boaz gave her some roasted grain to eat. She ate all she wanted and still had some left over.  

{David Guzik} “Boaz showed great kindness and favor to Ruth at mealtime. It would be enough to have just invited her, but he also invited her to share fully in the meal, even the privileged dipping.”

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:  

**Message Bible** When she got up to go back to work, Boaz ordered his servants: “Let her glean where there’s still plenty of grain on the ground—make it easy for her.”  

{David Guzik} “This was more generous than the command in Leviticus 19:9-10. Boaz would allow Ruth to take some from among the already gathered sheaves of grain.”

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.  

**Message Bible** Better yet, pull some of the good stuff out and leave it for her to glean. Give her special treatment.”  

{David Guzik} “Boaz wanted to bless Ruth, but he didn’t want to dishonor her dignity by making her a charity case. So he allowed some grain to fall, supposedly on accident, so that she could pick it up.”

17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley. Boaz favored Ruth but she still had to work a full day. This was a sunrise to sundown job in the heat of the Middle East but her labor was not in vain.  

{www.Dictionary.com} “[An ephah (pronounced ee-fuh) was] a Hebrew unit of dry measure, equal to about a bushel (35 liters).” This was a wonderful day’s work for someone with nothing.

**RUTH REPORTS BACK TO NAOMI**

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.  

**NLT** She carried it back into town and showed it to her mother-in-law. Ruth also gave her
the roasted grain that was left over from her meal. {Adam Clarke} “As Ruth had received a distinct portion at dinner-time, of which she had more than she could eat, Ruth 2:14; it appears she brought the rest home to her mother-in-law, as is here related.”

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. Amplified Bible And her mother-in-law said to her, Where have you gleaned today? Where did you work? Blessed be the man who noticed you. So [Ruth] told [her], The name of him with whom I worked today is Boaz. This had to be a “wow” moment for Naomi when she heard the name of her relative, Boaz. She had slandered God in the previous chapter but, in spite of that, she KNEW it was nobody by Him that led Ruth to her relative.

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. Message Bible Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Why, God bless that man! God hasn’t quite walked out on us after all! He still loves us, in bad times as well as good!” Naomi went on, “That man, Ruth, is one of our circle of covenant redeemers, a close relative of ours!” {David Guzik} “Is this the same women who came into town saying, call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me (Ruth 1:20)? Is this the same woman who said, the Almighty has afflicted me (Ruth 1:21)? Of course it is! Now she sees more of God’s plan unfolding, so she can see better how all things are working together for good for those who love God.” What a lesson we have here! When we get through complaining about what God hasn’t done or, in this case, blaming God for our bad times, we’ll find out that He has a purpose that is beyond what we’re going through.

SIDE ROAD: We’ll find out later in this book why the relationship of Naomi and Boaz was important as we get into the Old Testament Law of the “kinsman redeemer” “covenant redeemer”.

21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. NLT Then Ruth said, “What’s more, Boaz even told me to come back and stay with his harvesters until the entire harvest is completed.” Here’s another “wow” moment! Ruth has been signed on for the remainder of the harvest. We’ll see that it includes the barley harvest, which they were in, and the wheat harvest.

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. NLT “Good!” Naomi exclaimed. “Do as he said, my daughter. Stay with his young women right through the whole harvest. You might be harassed in other fields, but you’ll be safe with him.” {JF&B} “[This was] a prudent recommendation to Ruth to accept the generous invitation of Boaz, lest, if
she were seen straying into other fields, she might not only run the risk of rude treatment, but displease him by seeming indifferent to his kind liberality. Moreover, the observant mind of the old matron had already discerned, in all Boaz’ attentions to Ruth, the germs of a stronger affection, which she wished to increase.”

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. The obedience of Ruth, a grown woman, to her mother-in-law helped her to retain the favor she already had and blessed her with additional favor as she continued with Boaz into the wheat harvest. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Just because you have God’s favor now does not mean that it cannot be cut off through your disobedience.
Chapter 3

Now the story of Ruth and Naomi take a dramatic turn. Naomi is no longer content to have this young woman as her caregiver and she knows that Ruth has certain rights as a widow of a Jew regardless of being a Moabite. Naomi, in her wisdom, moves Ruth towards marriage.

**NAOMI ADVISES RUTH ON THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER LAW**

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? **Message Bible** One day her mother-in-law Naomi said to Ruth, My dear daughter, isn’t it about time I arranged a good home for you so you can have a happy life?  

By now the harvest of the previous chapter is finished and Boaz and Ruth have probably developed a nice relationship. Naomi has, no doubt, heard of this daily from her daughter-in-law. She likes to hear the daily accounts but this is ancient times and a prolonged “relationship” between single people was unheard of in those days. It was an unsafe time, as seen in the Book of Judges, and if some rogue thought that Ruth was less than virtuous, the results could be disastrous for her. In addition, their relationship was ammunition for the town gossips. Maybe Naomi had heard their talk and realized that it’s time for this relationship to legally move to the next level. (I emphasize that word because the steps taken later in this chapter may appear manipulative to us but they were completely in line with God’s Word.)

2 And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. **NLT** Boaz is a close relative of ours, and he’s been very kind by letting you gather grain with his young women. Tonight he will be winnowing barley at the threshing floor. There are two terms hear that need to be understood before going forward – winnowing and threshing floor. {JF&B} “The winnowing process is performed by throwing up the grain, after being trodden down, against the wind with a shovel. The farmer usually remained all night in harvest-time on the threshing-floor, not only for the protection of his valuable grain, but for the winnowing. That operation was performed in the evening to catch the breezes which blow after the close of a hot day, and which continue for the most part of the night.”  

Winnowing took place on the threshing floor. Dr. J. Vernon McGee in his commentary gives us this about the threshing floor: “A **threshing floor** was located on top of a hill to catch any wind that was blowing in order to blow away the chaff. The clay soil was packed to a hard smooth surface, and ordinarily it was circular with rocks placed around it. When the wind died down – whether it be at sundown, nine o’clock, midnight, or whatever time it was – they held a
great religious feast. *After the feast was over, the men would sleep around the grain. Since the threshing floor was circular, they would put their heads toward the grain and their feet would stick out like spokes. They slept that way to protect the grain from marauders or thieves who might break through and steal.*” This may be more than you ever wished to know about these two words but it will help us understand the rest of this chapter. (The picture on the previous page gives an example of a threshing floor. It’s high in the hills and circular. This particular one is more established as it has a fixed wall around it.)

Now Naomi has made a small statement that Ruth may have understood from Naomi’s teaching or it may be completely foreign to her. But Naomi is about to begin the “kinsman-redeemer” process and she notes that Boaz is of their kindred or a close relative. We’ll watch this begin to play out in this chapter.

**SIDE ROAD:** It’s time to get into the law of the “kinsman-redeemer” because the actions that Ruth is about to undertake are under the guidance of that law. We find it in Deut. 25:5-9.

{JF&B} “The Mosaic law rendered the custom [mandatory] (Mt 22:25) on younger brothers, or the nearest kinsman, to marry the widow (Ru 4:4), by associating the natural desire of perpetuating a brother’s name with the preservation of property in the Hebrew families and tribes. If the younger brother declined to comply with the law, the widow brought her claim before the authorities of the place at a public assembly (the gate of the city); and he having declared his refusal, she was ordered to loose the thong of his shoe—a sign of degradation—following up that act by spitting on the ground—the strongest expression of ignominy and contempt among Eastern people. The shoe was kept by the magistrate as an evidence of the transaction, and the parties separated.”

The key to this law is that it was initiated by the woman—something totally unusual in that day. Dr. McGee said that it had two purposes: (1) protect womanhood and (2) protect land rights. The woman was protected because if her husband died and she was left to take care of land, cattle, and property, she would be in a strait. She could then initiate the law of the “kinsman-redeemer” and demand that the nearest male relative marry her and raise up their first born to her dead husband while subsequent children would be his. If he refused, she had legal recourse in this law also. It protected the property because it kept it in the family. Yes, it was a strange law but it worked because it came from God. But the key to the law was that the woman had to start the process and claim the right of kinsman-redeemer.

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. **NLT** Now do as I tell you—take a bath and put on perfume and dress in your nicest clothes. Then go to the threshing floor, but don’t let Boaz see you until he has finished eating and drinking. Ruth has probably been wearing the clothes of a widow since the death of her husband. She’s worked in the fields with the men and probably smelled like the men. In spite of that, Boaz has obviously been attracted to her. Now Naomi wants her to discard those and put on clothes for appeal. I can imagine the conversation, “It’s time for you to look and
smell like a woman and not a man. That’s the only way we’re going to take this relationship to
the next level.”

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.  {David Guzik} “In that day, this was understood to be the role of a servant - to lay at their
master’s feet and be ready for any command of the master. So, when Naomi told Ruth to lie down
at Boaz’s feet, she told her to come to him in a totally humble, submissive way. Don’t lose sight
of the larger picture: Ruth came to claim a right. Boaz was her … kinsman-redeemer, and she
had the right to expect him to marry her and raise up a family to perpetuate the name of
Elimelech. But Naomi wisely counseled Ruth to not come as a victim demanding her rights, but
as a humble servant, trusting in the goodness of her kinsman-redeemer. She said to Boaz, ‘I
respect you, I trust you, and I put my fate in your hands.’”  Before we go crazy on this verse,
there is NOTHING sexual or perverse or manipulative about what Ruth was doing. However,
this could have turned out disastrous if Boaz had not been a godly man. Remember, the
threshing floor is high on a hill, secluded, and filled with men. But the character of Boaz has
already been tested and Naomi trusts that all will be well with her daughter-in-law who she now
views as a daughter.

RUTH OBEYS NAOMI
5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.  {Saints’ Principle:} The
humility and submission of Ruth is a lesson for everyone.

6 And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.
It’s interesting that all translations say “she went down” to the threshing floor when everyone
agrees that the threshing floor was up. Gideon tried to do his threshing at the winepress (which
was down) and had limited success. You had to get the grain into the wind.

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.
Amplified Bible And when Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went
to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then [Ruth] came softly and uncovered his
feet and laid down.  This is just as Naomi instructed her.

8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a
woman lay at his feet.  {NIV} In the middle of the night something startled the man; he
turned—and there was a woman lying at his feet!  {David Guzik} “Since Boaz had been there
to protect against thieves, it must have given him quite a shock to wake up and know someone
was there. But his shock quickly turned to wondering when he found out the visitor was a
woman.”  At the threshing floor, the landowners slept with their workers to help protect their
grain and to help in the process.
THE PROCESS IS STARTED

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. NLT “Who are you?” he asked. “I am your servant Ruth,” she replied. “Spread the corner of your covering over me, for you are my family redeemer.” After the long period of time they had been together, you would think Boaz would know Ruth but he’s been startled out of his sleep there in the dark and all he sees is a shadowy figure covered with a veil. Her response to his question tells him that she is claiming the right of kinsman-redeemer.

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. NLT “The Lord bless you, my daughter!” Boaz exclaimed. “You are showing even more family loyalty now than you did before, for you have not gone after a younger man, whether rich or poor. BOAZ IS HAPPY! He probably had some insecurity before about his role as kinsman-redeemer because of his age but now this young woman has claimed HIM! He’s about to get in a hurry.

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. NLT Now don’t worry about a thing, my daughter. I will do what is necessary, for everyone in town knows you are a virtuous woman. SANTS’ PRINCIPLE “Boaz” wants a woman who already has a great reputation.

12 And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. So Boaz has been thinking about this and doing his research. He’s not totally caught off guard. He just didn’t expect her to go after an older man because, Moabite or not, she has distinguished herself as a “prized catch”. He is a happy and excited man but he knows that there are things he must do to win this prize.

BOAZ AGREES TO WORK THE PROCESS

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. Message Bible So stay the rest of the night. In the morning, if he wants to exercise his customary rights and responsibilities as the closest covenant redeemer, he’ll have his chance; but if he isn’t interested, as God lives, I’ll do it. Now go back to sleep until morning. These are not the words of someone who is reluctantly obeying God. No, he’s eager and she has now become his number one priority.

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. NLT So Ruth lay at Boaz’s feet until the morning, but she got up before it was light enough for people to
recognize each other. For Boaz had said, “No one must know that a woman was here at the threshing floor.” Boaz had a plan but he needed to get to the nearer kinsman to make sure it didn’t get messed up. Also, he wanted Ruth’s reputation to be kept so he had to make sure she left there before anyone spotted her.

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. {David Guzik} “As a proper gentleman, Boaz did not send Ruth home empty-handed. Not having any chocolates, he gave her six handfuls of grain.”

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. Amplified Bible And when she came home, her mother-in-law said, How have you fared, my daughter? And Ruth told her all that the man had done for her. The other translations have worked to clarify something in the King James Version that probably did not need to be clarified. Dr. McGee said that Naomi knew exactly who Ruth was – she called her “my daughter”. The question is the kind of question we might ask today of someone who was reluctant to follow our guidance. In this case, she’s asking, “Are you now Mrs. Boaz or are you still Ruth the Moabite Widow?” How did my guidance turn out?

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. I’ll bet Naomi is feeling very good now. She never wanted Ruth to be stuck with her as her caregiver. Ruth is obviously still very young and Naomi wanted the best for her. There is a genuine bond between these two women, as close as any natural mother and daughter. The final bit of good news is that he sent her away with a gift. Saints’ Principle: “Boaz” not only loves you but he also loves your family.

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 distinguished herself in Chapter 1 as a complainer. Since that time, she has distinguished herself as a woman of great wisdom. Now Ruth can just rest. Boaz will take care of all that needs to be done. Saints’ Principle: Man, so you claim to be “Boaz”? Then take care of all that needs to be done!
Chapter 4

We have come to the most important and exciting part of this book – the marriage of Ruth and Boaz. However, it wasn’t handed to them but there wasn’t much of a fight. At the end, this marriage was abundantly blessed because they followed God.

**BOAZ MEETS THE ELDERS ON THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER LAW**

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. **Message Bible** Boaz went straight to the public square and took his place there. Before long the “closer relative,” the one mentioned earlier by Boaz, strolled by. “Step aside, old friend,” said Boaz. “Take a seat.” The man sat down. The “gate” of the city was where all the business of the city was conducted in Old Testament times. It literally was around the front gates of the city. Just when Boaz went there, divine guidance brought the unnamed “closer relative” into his path and Boaz got right down to business. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** “Boaz” understands the urgency of this type of business and does not delay. This is how saints should behave when God speaks a Word into our lives!

**SIDE ROAD:** The “closer relative” is never given a name. In this verse, the literal translation (updated for today) was “Mr. So-and-So” even though he was not only a relative of Naomi but also a relative of Boaz (see verse 3). {David Guzik} “The writer of Ruth never identified the name of the nearer kinsman, because he was not worthy of the honor. He declined to fulfill his obligations as the nearer kinsman to Ruth.” Remember from the prior chapter that the refusal to complete this transaction was met with dishonor and disgrace upon the one who refused. IT WAS NOT OPTIONAL.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. These ten men were chosen to be witnesses to the kinsman-redeemer process and Boaz’s negotiations with the “closer relative”. {JF&B} “In ordinary circumstances, two or three were sufficient to attest a bargain; but in cases of importance, such as matrimony, divorce, conveyancing of property, it was the Jewish practice to have ten.”

**THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN**

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: 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. **Message Bible** Boaz then said to his relative, “The piece of property that belonged to our relative Elimelech is being sold by his widow Naomi, who has just returned from the country of Moab. 4 I thought you ought to know about it. Buy it back if you want it—you can make it official in the presence of those sitting here and before the town elders. You have first redeemer rights. If you don’t want it, tell me so I’ll know where I stand. You’re first in line to do this and I’m next after you.” He said, “I’ll buy it.” Boaz, whether intentional or not,
was shrewd in his dealings with the “closer relative”. He brought up the matter of the land, something of great value, before he brought up the issue of Ruth. If the matter was only to be land, the “closer relative” was ready to seize it. This also gave Boaz an indication of where this man’s mind was. As a resident of the town, he should have known that there was more to this transaction than just land because verse 3:11 tells us that Ruth was the talk of the town. Perhaps the “closer relative” was hoping that he didn’t have to perform the whole job or Boaz was testing him to see how much he really knew about this transaction. (I know “transaction” sounds ugly and demeaning but that’s exactly what this was.)

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. NLT Then Boaz told him, “Of course, your purchase of the land from Naomi also requires that you marry Ruth, the Moabite widow. That way she can have children who will carry on her husband’s name and keep the land in the family.” {David Guzik} “Boaz then put the surprise on the nearer kinsman. He told him that he wasn’t only dealing with Naomi and the property of Elimelech, he also had to deal with Ruth. Because Naomi was older and beyond the years of bearing children, the nearer kinsman was not expected to marry Naomi and raise up children to the family name of her deceased husband Elimelech. But Ruth was another matter - she was able to marry and bear children.” Either the “closer relative” didn’t know this or was trying to get by with the land only. Either way, he was negotiating without having all of the facts and, because of that, he was losing!

BOAZ BECOMES THE KINSMAN-REDEEMER

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. NLT “Then I can’t redeem it,” the family redeemer replied, “because this might endanger my own estate. You redeem the land; I cannot do it.” {David Guzik} “Probably, the man had grown sons that had already received their inheritance of lands. The problem of dividing that inheritance among future children he would have with Ruth was more than he wanted to deal with. Also, no doubt, the man was married - and knew it would be awkward (at best!) to bring home Ruth as wife number two.” Remember, this was not just a simple transaction. The first-born child that Ruth would bear for the “closer relative” would actually be part of Elimelech’s legacy. Plus, he’s bringing another woman (and a Moabite woman!) into his house. He had a responsibility, though, to do this but he was willing to accept the dishonor and disgrace to avoid marring his own inheritance. (There is no indication in the text of what he meant by that.)

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 neighbor: and this was a testimony in Israel. NLT Now in those days it was the custom in Israel for anyone transferring a right of purchase to remove his sandal and hand it to the other
party. This publicly validated the transaction. {Adam Clarke} “The law of such a case is given at large in Deuteronomy 25:5-9. It was simply this: If a brother, who had married a wife, died without children, the eldest brother was to take the widow, and raise up a family to the brother deceased; and he had a right to redeem the inheritance, if it had been alienated. But if the person who had the right of redemption would not take the woman, she was to pull off his shoe and spit in his face, and he was ever after considered as a disgraced man. In the present case the shoe only is taken off, probably because the circumstances of the man were such as to render it improper for him to redeem the ground and take Ruth to his wife; and because of this reasonable excuse, the contemptuous part of the ceremony is omitted.” This seems a little confusing to us and it was obviously somewhat confusing then because the writer of this book tries to clarify it. (The writer also must have lived some time after this because he states that this occurred “in former time”.) The disgraceful part of the ceremony, the woman spitting in his face, was probably omitted because the man had a reason why he could not redeem Ruth, even though he doesn’t bring it out, or Ruth may have chosen to not go to this extreme especially as a foreigner. Plus, there was another kinsman-redeemer, the one she really wanted, ready to step in.

8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. Message Bible So when Boaz’s “redeemer” relative said, “Go ahead and buy it,” he signed the deal by pulling off his shoe. I’m sure that the terminology in this verse is offensive to women. In both translations, the whole “transaction”, including Ruth, is characterized by the word “it”. They’re not buying sheep or a wagon. Yes, land is involved but the most precious part of this was Ruth. However, remember that we’re talking about something that occurred nearly 4,000 years ago and “it” referred to the process rather than the people.

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. 10 Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day. Boaz’s pronouncement legally sealed the transaction. By announcing “ye are witnesses this day”, Boaz puts the seal on his marriage and land transaction publicly requesting the blessing of those that were there to see this proceeding.

{JF&B} “Although the widow of Chilion was still living, no regard was paid to her in the disposal of her husband’s property. From her remaining in Moab, she was considered to have either been married again, or to have renounced all right to an inheritance with the family of Elimelech.” SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: In like manner, when we turn our back on God and return to the world, we forfeit all rights to the blessings that God had in store for us.
THE BLESSING UPON THE MARRIAGE OF RUTH AND BOAZ

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: 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. They have prophesied the kind of greatness that would change history upon this marriage – and it did come to pass! Rachel and Leah were great in Israel as the mothers of the originators of the twelve tribes. These two built the house of Israel. But Ruth’s great-grandson, David, built Israel to levels not seen since that day. Also, like Pharez and Tamar, Ruth and Boaz are now in the line of Christ. It makes you wonder at the awesomeness of God’s grace and mercy since Ruth’s lineage and Tamar’s actions should have kept them out of the line of Christ! But only the modern day Pharisees look at it like that.

BOAZ AND RUTH MARRY AND BECOME PARENTS

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. What blessedness is in this verse! Boaz, who seems to be an older man, is now married and married to a woman of a great reputation. Ruth’s commitment to Naomi and the God of Israel has been repaid with marriage (to a man of means) and a child. But as we read on, we’ll see that there were more to be blessed in this.

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. Naomi had lost EVERYTHING in Moab. She lost her husband and her children and they had given her no grandchildren. Now she is blessed because Ruth saw something in her and she finally has that grandson. But look at the words of the women – “his name may be famous in Israel”. If they only knew how famous his name would be. {David Guzik} “It was fitting that these blessings in the life of Naomi be given so much attention at the end of the book. Naomi was the one whose original returning to the LORD began all this great work of God. If Naomi had not decided to go back to Bethlehem, the land of Israel, and the God of Israel, none of this would have happened.”

SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE: There is awesome power in repentance.

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.

NLT May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons! What a change from chapter 1! Naomi complained but God restored. She went through a process to get there but God, once again, proved Himself to be faithful.

16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.
17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David. Because of the kinsman-redeemer law, the women are technically correct – the child is Naomi’s. {Dake} “[They] were fulfilling the law by raising up seed for the dead and keeping his name alive.”

The name Obed means “servant” or “serving”. This is probably in reference to the life that Ruth has lived throughout this book. The unknown writer, who must have lived in the days of King David, or after, is really filling in historical references regarding David’s family.

**CLOSING GENEALOGY FROM PHAREZ TO 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 are all key names mentioned in the genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1) but what a motley crew! Pharez was born of incest by Judah with his daughter-in-law. Salmon married Rahab the Harlot and was the father of Boaz. David was a forgotten child. And that’s only a few of these men. My only other thought is that there must be some names missing even though these are the same ones mentioned repeatedly in the Scripture. The period from the birth of Pharez to the birth of David is 858 years (http://biblehub.com/timeline/old.htm). That means that either some names are missing or some of the earlier men lived way over 100 years.
**THE BOOK OF RUTH**

**EPILOGUE**

We have come to the end of the Book of Ruth so let’s recap the major things we’ve learned. This section is an abbreviated view of the Book of Ruth.

**INTRODUCTION**

This is the first of two books in the Bible named after a woman (the other is Esther). The main character in this book is a Gentile who married two Hebrews while the main character in Esther is a Hebrew who married a Gentile. We don’t have a firm answer on who wrote the book so we don’t know when it was written.

**CHAPTER 1**

This book was written during the time of the judges, which began in the book by the same name and ended with Samuel (an approximately 300 year period). We don’t know where this story fits within that 300-year period but since Boaz is the son of Salmon and Rahab the Harlot (see Joshua 2; Matthew 1:5), it may be before the halfway mark of that period.

There are two key locations in this book: Bethlehem, a town in the land of Judah, and Moab, a neighboring country. The journey from Bethlehem to Moab was about 60 miles so it was not a long journey. Moab was a country under a curse by God while Bethlehem was in the Promised Land. Therefore, to move from Bethlehem to Moab would cause a great problem. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** When there’s a crisis in the land, it’s not time to move, it’s time to pray. Moving only takes the crisis with you especially if you are part of the situation.

The main characters in the book are Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They left Bethlehem, because of a famine, and moved to Moab. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Any decision or move made OUTSIDE of the will of God is STUPID no matter the reason or intent. While there, Elimelech died and his sons married women of Moab, Orpah and Ruth. They kept on living there for about ten years and then died.

After these events, Naomi had a mind to get things straightened out with God at least in getting her place of residence right so she announced that she’s going back to Bethlehem. Ruth and Orpah decide to go with her but Orpah turns back after some insistence by Naomi. Ruth, however, makes a declaration that changes her life and puts this book in the Bible: **NLT But Ruth replied, “Don’t ask me to leave you and turn back. Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God. Wherever you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord punish me severely if I allow anything but death to separate us!”**

Even while returning to Bethlehem, Naomi continues to blame God for the horrible things she has gone through. Naomi continually points to God as the source of her bitterness with no thought of her role in getting to this point. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Deuteronomy 28 clearly points out the blessings of obedience and the curses of disobedience. Had obedience been the way of Elimelech, he would have never left Israel.
CHAPTER 2
We are introduced to Boaz. He was a relative of Elimelech; he’s probably older than Ruth but not necessarily as old as Naomi. We know three things about him: we know his name; we know he’s very wealthy; and we know that he’s a relative of Naomi. I wonder how women would behave, who are waiting on their “Boaz”, if “Boaz” was significantly older than they?

Ruth is determined to help the impoverished duo and goes to glean in the fields. By the hand of God, she gleans in the field of Boaz. She catches the eye of Boaz and his field supervisor has nothing but good to say about her. Boaz instructs her to only glean in his fields through the rest of the harvest and he had already warned his men not to bother her. This was a tremendous blessing. She not only had a place of gleaning, she also had protection and provision. Boaz is showing the example of the model husband. **SAINTS’ PRINCIPLE:** Ladies, don’t expect him to be “Boaz” after marriage if he wasn’t “Boaz” before.

Boaz shows great favor to Ruth. There is nothing in the text that says that Ruth was attractive but we do know he was impressed with her faithfulness to her mother-in-law.

CHAPTER 3
By now the harvest of the previous chapter is finished and Boaz and Ruth have probably developed a nice relationship. Naomi has, no doubt, heard of this daily from her daughter-in-law. But she knows it’s time to move this relationship to the next level through the law of the kinsman-redeemer.

This chapter focuses on the law of the “kinsman-redeemer” because the actions that Ruth is took are under the guidance of that law. See Deut. 25:5-9. The key to this law was that the woman initiated it – something totally unusual in that day. Dr. McGee said that it had two purposes: (1) protect womanhood and (2) protect land rights. The woman was protected because if her husband died and she was left to take care of land, cattle, and property, she would be in a strait. She could then initiate the law of the “kinsman-redeemer” and demand that the nearest male relative marry her and raise up their first born to her dead husband while subsequent children would be his. If he refused, she had legal recourse also. It protected the property because it kept it in the family.

Ruth makes this claim on Boaz under the guidance of Naomi and he is happy! She finds out that he already been looking into this but there is a nearer relative. But he has a plan to work this out.

There are some important “Boaz Principles” in this chapter for men to take note of:

- “Boaz” wants a woman who already has a great reputation.
- “Boaz” not only loves you but he also loves your family.
- Man, so you claim to be “Boaz”? Then take care of all that needs to be done!

Ladies, if the man can’t handle these, he’s not “Boaz”!
CHAPTER 4
In this chapter, we see the kinsman-redeemer process at work. The nearer relative, who is never mentioned by name, decides that he cannot go through with it leaving the door open for Boaz. He accepts, marries Ruth, and they have a child who is the great-grandfather of King David.

This chapter, and book, closes with a brief genealogy showing the marvelous grace and mercy of God. If we allowed “church people” (modern day scribes, Pharisees, and Sadducees) to govern our lives, we would never experience the blessings of God!

_And the Word of the Lord is Blessed!_
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