

A STUDY ON  
THE BOOK OF RUTH

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## Study Schedule

February 6- Introduction & Chapter 1:1-5  
February 13- Chapter 1:6-19a  
February 20- Chapter 1:6-19a  
February 27- Chapter 1:19b-2:7  
March 5- Chapter 2:8-23  
March 12- Chapter 2:8-23  
March 19- Chapter 3:1-18  
March 26- Chapter 3:1-18  
April 2- Chapter 4:1-22  
April 9- Chapter 4:1-22  
April 16- Concluding Discussion on Biblical Womanhood

## Reading the Scriptures

Many of us have inherited a method of studying Scripture, whether taught at seminary or from other teachers, which approaches the study of the Bible scientifically and historically. As moderns steeped in the scientific method of deduction we often come to the text as scientists, dissecting and separating the parts from the whole, analyzing Divine revelation word by word and line by line. We want to understand the Word in the way we want to understand the pieces and parts of an atom, or to determine what makes a clock 'tick'. We move from the particular to the general hoping we will arrive at the grand theory or meaning of a thing. Such a method brings out the historian within. We want to determine the exact date of when a particular book of the Bible was written, precisely whom the author is. Searching to determine the specific historical context in which it was written and so on. Such a method, though not necessarily problematic, does produce certain results.

## We're Not Scientists

In the first place, a scientific approach can easily remove or disengage us from the humanity of scripture. The Bible is a book about the human experience, about being. It is the record of how humanity, from Adam and Eve, lives before the face of the Almighty God. It speaks to reality, of the Divine Reality, and how people have both flourished and fallen within it. Holy Scripture is a means of discourse between the Creator and his creation, it is personal, it is relational. Surely we find this human-divine interaction, of living this life with all of its joys and struggles, articulated in the Psalms. But science, by its nature, removes one from its object of

study, placing a distance between to ensure we are ‘neutral’ and impartial observers. In short, we remove ourselves from the humanity of the Holy text.

Second, in dissecting the parts first, we easily lose the knowledge of the whole, like a table full of jigsaw pieces without any idea of what the finished picture looks like. In this atomized age, the tendency to atomize everything comes naturally. We abstract verse from verse, chapters from the book, and finally, the book from the grand arch of redemption which moves from garden to garden (from Genesis to Revelation). When a text or whole book is removed from the bigger story told in both the Old and New testaments, we lose continuity. Which is partly the reason for why so many Christians avoid the Old Testament either to a perceived lack of understanding or from thinking it has nothing to do with this present Christian life. But the entirety of the scriptures reveal God acting throughout all of human history from the dawn of Creation to the present and even into the future when heaven and earth and all of creation are unified in the marriage supper of the Lamb, the final and permanent union of God and man forever wedded to the Lamb when the new Jerusalem descends to earth and saints of every tongue, tribe and nation worship the True Temple, the Lord Jesus Christ, who lights up the world for all of eternity (Rev 21).

### **We’re Not Merely Historians Either**

Now, a historical approach to the Bible is not misguided in and of itself, a purely Historical reading (*Pura Natura*) is necessary for understanding and can be helpful. But history often produces approximations and limited facts. It also tends to entrap us in the world of men, in the world of material phenomena: who did what, why, and when. Our focus can easily remain in the ‘flatlands’. In this secular age we’re already conditioned to comprehend the world and its dealings to be devoid of the transcendent, the spiritual, the mysterious and unseen. And because we are atomists we separate human history from Divine agency: God is not in the here and now if he even exists at all!

Pure history morphs into life-lessons, morality tales, and coaching to help us live the best possible life... ON EARTH. In other words, pure history loses any sense of the Christian telos, the “where we are going” aspect of history which is towards eternal heaven or hell. Morality or how to be ‘good people’ and ‘polite members of society’ eclipses the Biblical demand for holiness and virtue as to obtain the great reward of the Christian life: eternal union with the Lord Jesus Christ, that future day when we will see Him as he is and we will be fully seen. Theologians throughout the ages refer to this end as the ‘beatific vision’. The beholding of God in Christ, made one with him, perfected as he is Perfect, unimpeded relationship with Him who is the object and desire of our faith.

### **Christ is the Pursuit of Biblical Inquiry**

Science and history mustn’t distract the aim of studying the Bible which is to gain a deeper knowledge and intimacy with Christ; to be subsumed into the Divine life. In finding Christ we find ourselves. We gain more insight into whom and what we are as we enter more fully into the Divine life of God. In knowing Him we learn to love not only our God but our neighbor as well. *Perfect love casts out fear!* We see in the direct actions of God and in the holy

examples of the saints the fulfillment of the Law, how to Love God and love others. And, in learning to love, we move ever more closer to that perfect union for which we wait and hope.

### **In summary,**

- First and foremost, the Bible reveals the Trinitarian God Scripture speaks to the human experience. It reveals much about our relationship to God and to others. It is intended to insight faith, love, devotion, and the worship of God;
- Historical data pertaining to a particular book of the Bible places its historical events within the greater arch of redemptive history;
- It also helps to understand figures of speech, customs, and certain phenomena related to geography and world affairs;
- Historical books of the Bible take place in human history mustn't preclude Divine Providence, agency, and presence. God is active in history, in the affairs of men, within the order of the cosmos.

### **How then should we approach studying the Old Testament Scriptures?**

- Beyond a plain and historical reading of the Scripture
  - We must read Christologically, in search of Christ
  - Augustine wrote: "The New Testament is in the Old Testament concealed, the Old Testament is in the New Testament revealed;
  - "Emmaus Road" (Luke 24:13): Christ is the treasure in the field, the pearl of great prize to be found in the Old Testament;
  - We must read the Old Testament spiritually, to unearth the deeper meanings of the text;
  - We must read it devotionally, to be conformed into the image and likeness of Christ.

### **Points of Emphasis**

#### **+ Ruth is a Human Story**

- It portrays the realities of this life: Hardships, tests of faith, suffering loss (home, wealth, status, identity, husband, children), mourning & sorrow, enduring Divine discipline, all of the bitter waters of the human experience;
  - And, we find, joy, hope, surprise, restoration, happiness, abundance, gain, life, and bliss;
- The great depths of human relationship is on display: gratitude, patience, loyalty, love, friendship, trust, encouragement, humility, honor, duty, virtue, wisdom, nurturing, understanding, courage, chastity, obedience, and grace.

#### **+ It reveals God's hand in the affairs of this world**

- + God rarely speaks, no one speaks to God directly, and God doesn't perform any supernatural activities in the book.
- + Only twice is the action of God mentioned by name (1:8; 4:13)

- + He gave food to the people
- + He gave conception to Ruth
  
- + **It shows How God Deals with People**
  - + It manifests the *Hessed* of God
  - + The word *hessed* appears three times (1:8; 2:20; 3:10)
  - + The mercy and kindness of Divine covenant loyalty is wonderfully displayed in the experience of Ruth and Naomi (2:20) and comes to expression in the life of Boaz.
  - + YHWH cares for and protects all those who come to trust under his wings (Ruth 2.12)
  
- + **It's main motif centers on 'Kinsman-Redeemer' (Goel) Law**
  - + The only Old Testament narrative about this concept
  
- + **In Boaz, we find a type of Christ, his later ancestor**
  - + Boaz acts as a type of the great Agent of YHWH, Jesus Christ, foreshadowing the saving work of Christ, his later descendant.
  - + Boaz *had the right of redemption* and yet *was clearly under no obligation to intervene on Ruth's behalf*. So it is with Christ.
  - + Boaz comes to the aid of poor widows (James 1:27), came to their rescue as a man whose very life was governed by the law of God and so dealt rightly with the poor, oppressed, and vulnerable (Ps 72:2, 4, 12, 13; Isa 11:4)
  
- + **The Book of Ruth Foreshadows the universal purpose of God toward Jew and Gentile, as promised in the Abrahamic covenant (Gen 12:3...) which comes to its fullest expression in the gospel of Jesus Christ (Gal 3:28, 29)**
  - + Messianic History
  - + Ancestral background of David
  - + The Promised Seed, the Redeemer of God's people

## Authorship

Much like Job, the book of Ruth is hard to determine authorship.

- Most likely the product of a single author, male or perhaps female
- Talmudic tradition attributes it to the prophet Samuel
- He or she was literate, knew Hebrew, and was familiar with certain ancient Israelite traditions (Levirate marriage/Goel) and literature (4:11-12, 17b-22)
  - Deut 25:7; Gen 38:8, Derived from 'Levir' (brother)
  - "Goel" Kinsman Redeemer= Redemption Laws (Leviticus 25:25)

## Date of Composition

Biblical scholarship assigns a wide range of possible dates for the Book of Ruth.

- Written after the period of Judges, makes mention of “ancient customs”
- Written prior to Solomon’s birth otherwise the genealogy at the close would hardly have failed to add: “And David begat Solomon.”
- Most likely written at the height of David’s kingly reign

## Outline of The Book

- A. Naomi, widowed and bereft of her sons, returns from Moab to her native Bethlehem with her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth (1:1–22).
- B. Ruth gleans in the field of Naomi’s wealthy kinsman Boaz (2:1–23).
- C. Ruth appeals to Boaz to perform the part of a kinsman-redeemer (3:1–18).
- D. Ruth is married to Boaz and gives birth to Obed (4:1–17).
- E. Genealogy from Perez to David (4:18–22).

# THE BOOK OF RUTH

*Part 1: An ancient Israelitish family of Bethlehem falls into misery. They left their native country in a time of distress, in order to save themselves from participating in it. But in the stranger's land, in Moab, a harder fate comes upon them.*

<sup>1</sup> In the days when **the judges ruled** there was a **famine in the land**, and a man of **\*Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab\*\***, he and his wife and his two sons.<sup>2</sup> The name of the man was **Elimelech** and the name of his wife **Naomi**, and the names of his two sons were **Mahlon and Chilion**. They were **Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah**. They went into the country of **Moab** and remained there.<sup>3</sup> But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, **died**, and **she was left with her two sons**.<sup>4</sup> These took **Moabite wives**; the name of the one was **Orpah** and the name of the other **Ruth**. They lived there about **ten years**,<sup>5</sup> and both **Mahlon and Chilion died**, so that **the woman was left without her two sons and her husband**.

*Our story begins as a tale of sorrow and woes.*

## ***“When the Judges ruled”***

The story takes place in the time of the Judges, possibly during the judgeship of Eli, the priest of Shiloh in 1 Sam 1:1–4:22. A judge of Israel for 40 years and the mentor of the prophet Samuel (1120-1000).

*\*\*Throughout this story the author focuses on the RESULTS of action and decisions rather than the motivations behind them.*

## ***Elimelech's Decision to Leave***

Faced with hardship, he left his land and people for a foreign land. The case stood very different when **Abraham for a like reason went to Egypt (Gen. 12:10)**; for Abraham went with all his house, left no one behind, and was everywhere a stranger. But **Isaac is already forbidden from adopting the same method of relief (Gen. 26:2)**, and **Jacob removes to Egypt**, not on account of the famine, but **because his lost Joseph has been found again**.

**But Elimelech** undertakes, by his own strength and in selfish segregation from his fellows, to change the orderings of divine providence. The famine was ordained as a chastening discipline for Israel; but instead of repenting, Elimelech seeks to evade it by going to a foreign

land. Whether this can be done, the ensuing narrative is about to show. He died soon after arriving evidenced by “but/and” continuing the narrative and not seeing his son marry.

**Mahlon & Kilyon.** His sons were unwilling to return after his death and against prohibitions clearly stated in the Law, took foreign wives (Deut 7:2-3).

Their transgression withheld the blessing of fertility. The sons established their home in Moab and Moab became their grave.

**Moab.** A barren and unfertile land. Removing themselves from the community and people of God, did not result in blessing, but rather, in desolation.

**\*Beth-Lehem.** They leave the “house of bread” (*bet-lehem*) for the bitterness of Moab. Naomi hears that God is providing “bread” (*lehem*) and set off to return to the “house of bread” Bethlehem. Her household acquired an abundance of bread (2:17-18) and built up an abundant household (4:11-12) from which will be born the “bread of Life” in the “House of bread”, Jesus Christ, Manna from Heaven who was given for the life of the world!

## NOTES

1.
  - a. **Moab.** See map above.
  - b. **Ephrathites**, another term for residents in Bethlehem, probably referring to Elimelech’s clan
  - c. **Bethlehem of Judah** to distinguish from the same town found in Zebulun (Josh 19:15)
  - d. **Sojourn**, alien. They were aliens in the country of Moab.
2.
  - a. **Elimelech.** Eli= God is Melek= King = “My God is King”
  - b. **Naomi**= na oo mi’= “God is my kindness”. She will feel as if the Lord has been unkind at 1:20.
  - c. **Mahlon & Kilyon.** Treated as one, a pair= Sickness, death, sterility & annihilation
    - i. Mahlon= Sterility, Death
    - ii. Kilyon=annihilation, the root *klh* used in describing the destruction of a people or lineage (Ex 32:10, 12; 33:3, 5; Lev 26:44; Num 16:21; 17:10; 25:11; 1 Sam 15:18)
  - d. **Remained there**, meaning “they became” or assimilated into the Moabite people
3. No notes.
4.
  - a. **Orpah**, *oreph*= “back of the neck” she will ‘turn back’ to her people
  - b. **Ruth**, “refreshment, to be satisfied, full” she will, in the end, be satisfied by God



- i. *Moabites* descended from Moab, son of Lot by his older daughter (Gen 19:37).
  1. Lot separated from Abraham, thus breaking family ties (13:11)
  2. Judah separated from his brothers (38:1)
  3. Elimelech left Bethlehem and his family/clan to sojourn in Moab
  4. In each case, a disaster happened.
  5. *Ironically, it will be a Moabite, a descendant of the wayward and schismatic Lot, who will reunite the descendants of Lot with the covenant people of Abraham. God is reconciling the nations to each other and to Himself.*

**c. *Ten Years***, they lived ten years after marriage and then died.

5. **Naomi**

**END OF WEEK ONE**

## Part 2: Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi (1:6-19a)

<sup>6</sup> Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had **heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food.** <sup>7</sup> So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

- **“Then she arose”**: Naomi (singular) meaning Naomi alone determined to return to Judah, Ruth, and Orpah started off with her, but were not of the original party that left Bethlehem.
- **Verbs: Hear, Arise, Return**
  - Naomi “arose” because she heard of God’s action, and believing, she returned;
  - She “heard” and acted in faith believing it to be true, which also lends weight to them not having found abundance in the fields of Moab (Death, lack of fertility, and food).
- **God Visited His People.** ַקָּדָשׁ (Paquad)
  - The years of famine come to an end in Bethlehem (but not in Moab!).
  - **God ‘visited’.** The Hebrew brings in the idea of ‘caring’, God “cared for” and “attended to” his people.
  - Note the *hesed* of God in that word of his attentive mercy upon Judah somehow reached the fields of Moab and Naomi’s ears.
  - **Why would they connect God with the giving of bread?**
  - **God remembered his people.**
    - The word ַקָּדָשׁ here used occurs repeatedly for such a return of divine remembrance.
    - **(Gen. 21:1)** God remembered (ַקָּדָשׁ) Sarah, silently mourning over her childlessness
    - **(Exodus 2:24)** and when they heard that God had observed (ַקָּדָשׁ) the sufferings of the people, and had looked upon their affliction, they bowed down and worshipped **(Ex. 4:31)**.
- *Naomi most likely struggled over and arrived at her decision not to take her DIL as they accompanied her to the banks of the Jordan, the eastern boundary of Judah.*

<sup>8</sup> But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, “Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

- First, *Note the sacrifice Naomi is willing to make for the good of her beloved DIL!*
  - Willing to give up all that is dear to her, all she has left (memory of the departed, family, friendship)
- **“Your mother’s home.”** In Naomi’s statement we should infer a family life worthy of imitation:

- A testimony to the sons who selected and married honorable women, and endured in loving them as they remained childless;
- Naomi created a godly home filled with the beneficial air of a family of Judah
- Marriage and family life form the real mirror of religious belief and worship
  - Marriage reflects the love of Christ (**Eph 5:22**)
- Ancient Israel, therefore, distinguished itself from the inhabitants of Canaan, not merely by the name of its god, but by its life at home in the family, by faithfulness and love to wife and child.
  - Family reflects the life and love of Christ as well (**Eph 5:22; 6:1**)
- Fidelity and chastity in marriage starkly contrasted to the Moabite practices
  - The sons did not act in entire accordance with the law when they married Moabitish wives; but neither did they unite with them in the idolatry of Baal-Peor (**Num 25**).
- Ruth and Orpah benefited from the morality of their husbands and the Israelite home which Naomi fostered and maintained.
- The women had not only heard the religion of Jehovah confessed in Moab (cf. the expression: Jehovah deal kindly with you, etc.), but they had seen the expression of it in domestic life.
- They loved their husbands in life and in death by loving and caring for their mother Naomi.
- The praise for all of this domestic godliness, joy, and love naturally belongs largely to Naomi the mother, who set the tone, modeled, and loved her husband, sons, and wives.

9 The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

- She is truly worthy of love who in her sorrows truly seeks the welfare of others!
  - Naomi is worthy of emulation
  - We see why her DIL loves her so deeply!
- Marriage was often where women received respect and protection;
  - **Menuchah.** The Hebrews spoke of the husband's house as a woman's "Menuchah" or "rest"- her secure and happy asylum from servitude, neglect, and abuse.
  - "Menuchah" is what Naomi desires for her daughters, which they would not receive in Judah as Moabites.
  - Not how among other evils, Israel is told that in the event of disobedience it shall have no "menuchah" (**Deut. 28:65**)
    - "Christ is our Rest." It is true, Israel's highest menuchah is God, Jehovah himself and his redemption. He is the true goal of life.
    - Says the prophet (**Isa. 11:10**): *"And it shall come to pass in that day: the Root of Jesse—to him shall the nation's repair, and his menuchah is glory."*

- And, hence, Christ also says, **(Mat 11:29):** “Learn of me, that I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest (*ἀνάπαυσιν, menuchah*) for your souls.” = Sabbath Rest
- “They lifted up their voices and wept!” The DIL react. Unified in sorrow.

10 And they said to her, “No, we will return with you to your people.”

- They wanted to stay with their Mother-in-Law. Naomi’s household, motherly relationship, and love won the affections of her daughter-in-law’s. They loved her and wanted to remain with her rather than return to her own people, to future husbands, family, stability, and normality.
  - They lived for 10 years under Naomi’s roof, in harmony and peace although a barren home;
  - What impressed them with the Israelite home, marriage, family dynamic?
  - Their kindness to the mother-in-law is perhaps even more remarkable than to their husbands. *An old german proverb says, “the mother in law forgets that she too was a daughter in law.”*
  - Great sorrow befell a happy and loving home.
  - The love between daughter in law and mother in law may be the weightiest testimony to the tenderness and purity of this Hebrew home
    - **(Micah 7:3-6; Luke 12:53)** The tie between daughter/mother in law is as close and sacred as that between mother/daughter, son/father
    - One of the last signs of social division and corruption when mother/daughter in law rises up against the other

*“When the home is itself an altar when the home is bright and sacred with a Divine Presence and law, then indeed there is no place like home.”*

11 But Naomi said, “**Turn back**, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?”

12 **Turn back**, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons,

13 would you, therefore, wait till they were grown? Would you, therefore, refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”

- **First, Great question!** “Why would they go with her?”
- **What are her arguments for them to return?**
- **“Turn Back” Twice!** *The hope of renewed marriage happiness does not exist in Judah. Neither I nor Israel can provide ‘menuchah’*
- *Calls them Daughter 3 times.*

- *“It is bitter to me for your sake.”*
  - **Naomi is the worse off!** *The possibility of marriage and family exists for the DIL’s but nothing awaits Naomi: no husband, no sons, no daughter in-laws, no grandchildren, nothing.*
- *“The Hand of the Lord has gone out against me.”* **Judg. 2:15. Job 19:21. Ps. 32:4. & 38:2. & 39:9, 10.**
  - *But she soon discovers that the Lord’s mercy endures forever.*

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

- Orpah saw a future in Moab, Ruth embraced Ruth goes to a foreign land and chooses poverty, not for a husband or a lover, but for the mother of him who long since was torn away from her. She refuses to leave her for the very reason that she is poor, old, and childless
- Nationality, law, customs were about to separate them but love such as Ruth has the power to overcome any earthly obstacles.

## END OF WEEK TWO

### Part 2: Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi (1:6-19a Continued)

15 And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.”

- The issue was not finally, an issue of different races or customs and laws, but the worship of different gods which truly separated these women (See V.10)

16 But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

- **What is it that causes Ruth to ‘cleave’ to Naomi?** = these very qualities of God draw others to him as well!
- **Ruth’s love is true love:** it cleaves to Naomi not for advantages, but on account of her virtues and amiability.
- **Where you go I will go. Where you lodge I will lodge.** Mt 8:20 “And Jesus said to him, “Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head.”
- **Your people will be my people. Your God (Elohim) my God (Elohim).**
  - Here she makes a confession of faith (see 2:11-12).
  - Conversion unites us to Christ AND his people.

17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

- ***Where you die, I will die.*** We do not grasp the weight of this in modern culture. To be buried with one's people in the land of their ancestors.
  - Joseph buried in Shechem. Gen 50:22-26; Ex 13:17-19; Heb 11:22; Acts 7:11-16
  - "Arises from Egypt" Prefigures the bodily resurrection and incorporation into the eternal city of God.
- ***May the Lord do so to me...*** Meaning, if I break my loyalty to you, your people, and our God, may he do more than take my life!
  - A vow not only to her mother in law but to God himself, invoking divine punishment should she depart from her vow of faith and fidelity.
- ***We should think of the Marriage vow (BCP 301).*** "Till death us do part."
  - Here we see the full extent of Ruth's love for Naomi.
- *Ruth vows fidelity to Naomi's God even though she herself has suffered the same Moab experience! What do you think?*

18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

- Naomi ceased urging Ruth to return to her Moabite family.

19a So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem.

- They journeyed together, united in love, humility, poverty and in faith.
- This verse ends the Moab portion of this story.

### Part 3: Naomi and Ruth Return (1:19b-22)

19b And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

- *Is this Naomi?* Expressing excitement, surprise, delight.

20 She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty (Shaddai), has dealt very bitterly with me.

- ***Bitter (mara).*** The Almighty God Has treated me bitterly.
  - "I am no longer the old Naomi; for what happiness I possessed, I have lost. I have no more anything that is pleasant about me: my life, like a salty, bitter spring, is without flavor or relish."
  - But... God can fill our mouths with sweet water! **Ex 15:22-27**
- ***YHWH doesn't change her name, she does!***
- ***Divine Name Changes***
  - A new identity and calling. It implies Divine sovereignty over the person.
  - **Abram** (exalted Father) = **Abraham** (father of a multitude) Gen 17:5
  - **Sarai** (she that strives) = **Sarah** (princess; the bearer of kings of peoples)
  - **Jacob** (leg puller/deceitful one) = **Israel** (he that strives and overcomes) **Gen 32:28**

- **Why the Use of Shaddai? (All-powerful, almighty)**
  - Occurs more frequently in Genesis than any other except Job
  - Always designates the gracious, fertile God, by whom the propagation of mankind is guaranteed.
    - **Gen. 17:1** where he says to Abram, “I make thee exceedingly fruitful,—to a father of a multitude of nations,”
    - **Gen. 28:3**: “El Shaddai will bless thee and make thee fruitful.”
    - **Gen. 35:11**: “I am El Shaddai, be fruitful, and multiply.”
    - **Gen. 48:3**: “El Shaddai appeared unto me—and said, Behold, I make thee fruitful and multiply thee.”
    - **Gen. 49:25**: “Shaddai shall bless thee—with blessings of the breasts (דְּמֵיֶשֶׁת) and of the womb.”
  - Naomi uses the name Shaddai, in speaking of her misery. For the death of her husband and her sons has rendered her family desolate and unfruitful.
- **Redeeming her name.** Naomi’s name will be redeemed in this story: from bitter (Mara) to pleasant (Naomi), 4:15.

### END OF WEEK THREE

### Exitus & Reditus

St. Augustine begins his monumental work, Confessions, with this statement “Thou hast made us for Thyself and [therefore] our hearts are restless till they rest in Thee” (1.1.1)

The human experience is the movement of the soul from God and returning back to Him. We see this in the prodigal. We also see this typified in Naomi’s Journey back to her land, her people, and her God.

21 I went away full, and the LORD (YHWH) has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi (Pleasant), when the LORD (YHWH) has testified against me and the Almighty (Shaddai) has brought calamity upon me?”

- **YHWH & Shaddai.** Note the use of two specific names of God.
- **I went away full...**
  - Do you sense a spirit of penitence? I went because it was my will to go, not God’s; now, God’s judgment has sent me back.
    - The ramifications of following ones will instead of Gods
    - Man goes, but God leads back home.
  - *She doesn’t blame Elimelech!* “I” went = ‘Me’ empty (Adam?)
- **Jehovah Testified Against.** This is legal language. Invoking covenant implications.
  - Naomi clearly sees judgment. “I went,” she says, “and God has testified that this going was a sin, the decision to go was not rooted in Him, but in ourselves.”

- *The outcome bears witness.* “Was it right or not, that I (namely, Elimelech and she) went away to Moab?” Men might be in doubt about it. But the end, she says, bears witness against us, who followed our own inclinations. God testified against her, for “Shaddai hath afflicted me.”
  - God is intricately involved in every aspect of life **Job 2:6-10; cf. Josh 24:20**
- **Shaddai Brought Calamity.** Disaster, destruction.
  - This statement is highly ironic, for ever-loyal Ruth stands by her side even as she speaks these words. These words reflect Naomi’s perspective, not the narrator’s, for Ruth will eventually prove to be the one who reverses Naomi’s plight and “fills” her “emptiness.” Naomi’s perspective will prove to be inaccurate and the women will later correct Naomi’s faulty view of Ruth’s value (see 4:15).
- **The Lord brought her back.** The grace in God bringing her to fertile fields, to her home and her people.

22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

- This is a concluding statement, summing up the events surrounding the day of their return to Bethlehem
- **Their return coincides with the beginning of harvest**
  - The Lord has brought them into abundance, food, life!
  - The Barley Harvest occurred at Passover= prefiguring redemption
  - The Barley Harvest ends 50 days later with the feast of Pentecost (Lv 23:16)
  - The story of God redeeming, gathering, and blessing ends at Pentecost (Acts 2:1)

## Part 4: Encountering the Kinsman (2:1-7)

1 Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. (*the narrator is speaking*)

- **Boaz.** “A worthy man” is better translated “a valiant hero” as spoken of Gideon (**Judg. 6:12**), Jephthah (**11:1**)
- He was a strong and able man in Israel, in war, and in peace.
- Most like had distinguished himself in conflicts of Israel against enemies, perhaps against Moab. The ancestor of David is, as the Midrash (Ruth 31, d) remarks, rightly thus described.
- His name, Boaz (בֹּאֵז), one of the pillars erected by Solomon (**1 Kings 7:19-21**), name = “son of strength, of enduring vigor.”

2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.”

- **They must care for themselves.** No one has come forward to help them.
  - Ruth takes the initiative to care for Naomi and herself



- She is under the household authority of Naomi
- **Ruth is unaware of the Law.** She hopes to find favor from one who will allow her to glean **Lev. 23:22; Deut. 24:19**

3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

- **After the reapers.** She waited behind and gleaned what was left to be taken.
- **She happened to come...** Do you see Providence, luck, chance?

4 And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."

- **Boaz arrives.** He enters for the first time, comes among the laborers and blesses them! "The Lord be with you!"
  - The presence of the Lord ushers in blessing
  - Blessing reverses the poverty of the soul and adds no burden to it (**Prov 10:22**)

5 Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

- **To whom does this woman belong?** In this patriarchal culture, Ruth would "belong" to either her father (if unmarried) or her husband (if married).

6 And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.

- Boaz is immediately aware of who Ruth is: foreigner, a Moabite woman, a part of Naomi's household.

7 (*the servant is speaking*) She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

- **She asked of the servant in charge, "Please let me glean..."** She has taken a risk. She has requested a better position, not simply to allow her to gather whatever grain as a foreigner she can! She's asking for Boaz to have favor upon her, to grant her more than she deserves or he is obligated to provide.

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

- **The abundant Blessing of Boaz.**
  - **He is aware of her extraordinary request.**
  - **Stay and glean in my field=** what's his is hers
  - **Keep close to my young women=** removes her solitude, includes her
  - **Have I not charged the young men=** protects her from the evil of others

- **Go to the vessels and drink**= he quenches her thirst  
[Compare this to Lk 15:10... the prodigal]
- **The abundance of God**
  - Rain= **Ps 68:9**
  - Harvest, food, milk & wine= **Ps 4:7; 23:5; 37:19**
  - Wealth and possessions= **Job 1:1-3**
  - *Examples of spiritual abundance*
    - The abundance of divine power= **Eph 3:20-21**
    - The abundance of divine grace= **Eph 1:3-14**
    - The abundance of human thanksgiving= **2Co 4:15**
    - The abundance of God's future blessing= **Jn 10:10; 1Co 2:9; 2Pe 1:11; Rev 14:3**

#### END OF WEEK FOUR

### Part 5: The Reward of Faithfulness Begins (2:10-17)

10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

- **She fell on her face.** In response to what? The abundant kindness and mercy of Boaz.
  - The outward posture of the body should signify the inward sincerity of the soul
    - *What examples can you think of from scripture?*
- *Why have I found favor. FIRST He took notice.* The first movement of grace.
- *I am a foreigner.* Unknown to Boaz (or so she assumes).
  - She is confessing her lack of worth to receive such abundant blessing
  - **(Eph 2:11-13)** How great is the love of Christ towards us who were strangers!

11 But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

- **All that you have done for your mother-in-law.**
  - **How would you describe ALL that she has done for Naomi?**
  - We love others when we love those whom we love (**Philemom 4-7**)
  - We love Christ when we love his people (**Mt 25:34-40**)
  - By loving others we are counted among Christ's flock (**Jn 13:34-35**)
- **AND how you left.**
  - She left everything behind for the unknown
  - She came to a people she did not know (**Jn 1:9**)
  - She emptied herself for the sake of the other (**Phil 2:1-10**)

12 The LORD 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!"

- **The Lord repay you and reward you.** *May you receive the reward of God for both your LOVE and FAITH.*
- Jesus promises rewards to his disciples (**Mt. 5:3–12**)
  - He slew the Pharisaic notion of meritorious service (**Lk. 17:7-10**)
  - discouraged desire for human reward (**Mt. 6:1**), since the Father is the disciple's best reward.
  - Work, and therefore reward, is certainly looked for, but simply as an index of living faith (**Jas. 2:14–16**), not as a basis of claim upon God.
  - The reward of salvation in Christ begins in time (**2 Cor. 5:5**) and its fulfilment is looked for after judgment (final rewards and punishments) when the covenant people enter into full enjoyment of the vision of God which is their enduring reward (**Rev. 21:1-3**).
- **Under whose wings you have come.** For her love's sake, she dared to make the God of Israel her God.
- (**Gen 15:1**) Like Abraham, leaving all, she went abroad. And as to Abraham God said, "I am thy great reward" so Boaz wishes that God may be to her a full reward.

13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

- **You have comforted me.** The first ray of sunlight has broken through her sorrow and hardship.
  - St. Chrysostom: "Observe that what happened to Ruth is analogous with what happened to us. For she was a stranger, and had fallen into the extremest distress; but Boaz, when he saw her, neither despised her poverty, nor condemned the lowliness of her family. So Christ took up the Church, and chose the stranger, who lacked the most necessary possessions, for his bride. But as Ruth would never have attained to such a union, had she not previously left her parents and given up people, home, and kindred, so the Church also does not become dear and deserving in the eyes of her Bridegroom, until she has left her heathen morals and customs."

14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.

- Having received the grace of God through Boaz she is fed with bread and wine.
- (**Ps 34:4-8**) **Taste and See.** Now she not only sees but tastes the goodness of God.
  - Analogous to baptismal conversion and partaking of the blessed eucharist.
  - Note how she communes with the people, not alone= partaking of the one cup and the one bread in the family of God.
  - Satisfied, and she had some left over (**Ps 23; Jn 6:10-13**)

15 When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.”

- **Let her glean even among the sheaves.** He grants her request allowing her to gather from the best position, not behind the other women, but with them as equals.
  - In ver. 9, he told them not to “touch” her.
  - In ver. 15, he tells them not to “shame” her, to say things to her that would make her blush, whether they referred to her nationality or to the special favor by which she was directed to glean close behind the reapers. In ver. 16, having ordered the people even to pull ears out of the bundles for her (to benefit from the work of others), he charges them not to “speak harshly” or to scold her for the favor she has been granted.

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

- She gleans till evening, takes the pains, too, to beat out what she has gathered, and carries home a plentiful harvest, almost an ephah. It is impossible to ascertain the quantity, still less its weight, exactly, but it was considerable, say fifty-five pounds.
- She labors not for herself, but for Naomi as well, always with the other’s needs in mind.

## Part 6: Obedience in Innocence (3:1-18)

1Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?”

- **My daughter, should I not seek rest for you?** This is the second time we see Naomi’s concern that her daughter-in-law would find and obtain “rest” (1:9). As previously discussed, the holy estate of marriage was often where women received respect and protection. The Hebrews spoke of “Rest” (*Menuchah*) found in the husband’s house as a woman’s “*Menuchah*” or “rest”- her secure and happy asylum from servitude, neglect, and abuse. Of course, finding rest in the security of the husband, or father, prefigures the true rest found only under the protection of God in the bridegroom Jesus Christ who says “Learn of me, that I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest (ἀνάπαυσιν / *menuchah*) for your souls” (Mat 11:29).
  - “Rest” isn’t merely cessation from work but speaks of protection, stability, security, and care. Of course, these happy graces are only found in the Bridegroom. In union with Him, we participate in all of the blessings of the Divine Life.
- **That it may be well with you.** Divine love places its concern on others, desiring only the best for the beloved.
  - What a beautiful and happy contrast presents itself now! The same mother-in-law who formerly, in her self-forgetfulness, bade her daughters-in-law return to Moab and find resting-places for themselves, is now in a position, self-forgetful as ever, to seek for Ruth the Moabitess a place in Israel, where it may be well with

her. And what was the force that brought about this beautiful revolution? The love of Ruth which seeks not her own, the faithfulness of Naomi which deserved such love.

2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

- ***Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were?*** When Ruth went to the field to glean, she only asked a right guaranteed to the widowed and the poor. To deny her the privilege of gleaning would have been to deprive her of her right; to injure or put her to shame in the exercise of it, would have been to diminish it. True, the liberal treatment she received from Boaz was no longer a right to be claimed, but the expression of good-will and kindness. Naomi recognized in this the providential arrangement of God. And it is precisely this also that gives courage to Ruth to claim for herself and for Naomi the second right to which she is entitled.
  - The second right Naomi now boldly seeks to claim is that of the goel, or Leverite marriage found in Deuteronomy 25:5, “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband’s brother shall go into her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.”
    - It was an ancient law in Israel, sanctioned by the Mosaic legislation that when a man died without issue, his brother was bound to marry his widow. This is a right of the woman. She can demand it of him, and if he refuses, put him openly to shame.
    - How early and deeply this usage was rooted in Israel, may be seen from Gen. 38, where the death of Onan is ascribed to his refusal to marry the widow Tamar. The significance of this usage is clear. It is also found among other nations, although distorted and rendered impure. It rests on the historical feeling of the nations, which leads them to attach importance to the preservation not only of the national spirit but also of the national body, by propagation.
    - In the first psalm, the pious man is compared with a tree whose leaf never withers. And the tree is, in fact, the image best adapted to explain the reason for the usage in question. It is not without reason that the founder of a people is called its stammvater [stem-father, trunk-father, cf. the Heb. terms מִטָּה and שִׁבְטָה shoot, sprout, branch, used for “tribe.”—Tr.].
    - United about this common trunk, the ancient peoples distinguished themselves nationally (from nasci) very sharply from those who were not his offshoots. The different families are the branches of this tree. But the head of a family is in his turn a stem, putting forth boughs, as a tree puts forth branches.
    - The withering of the tree is the image of death. As no branch in the tree, so no member of the family should perish. Now, the nation lives in its families. Hence, if a man dies without children, it is as if a branch

withered in the tree. To remedy this, a new branch is, as it were, grafted on the tree. This is done when the brother marries the widow and regards the son she bears as heir to the name and possessions of the deceased husband. But what if there be no brother? Is the name then to be after all extinguished and the branch to be forever wanting?

- The law, as given in Deut. 25:5 ff. does not indeed declare it, but it is an inference in accordance with its spirit, that in that case, the obligation passes over to the nearest relatives of the deceased. Every family—such is manifestly the idea of the usage—must take care that no member in it dies out. What the brother is to the brother, that when he has no brother, his more distant blood-relatives must be.
- With this in mind, we are led to think of our own engrafting by grace into the tree of Israel by the true *Goel*, the Lord Jesus Christ; our kinsman-redeemer who has brought us into the tree of life, his body, by which our name is not stamped out but numbered among the bride (Rom 11:11-24).

3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” 5 And she replied, “All that you say I will do.” 6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her.

- ***Wash therefore and anoint yourself.*** Ruth was directed to pay special attention to the adornment of her person, to which, to this extent at least, she had since the death of her husband been a stranger. She is to lay aside the weeds of mourning and the garments of toil, and after bathing and anointing, don the festive garb; for the expedition on which she goes is of a joyous, bridal nature.
  - Does this not bring to mind the Shulamite who adorned herself before entering into the presence of her beloved? And did not he say to her, “*Your shoots are an orchard of pomegranates with all choicest fruits, henna with nard, nard and saffron, calamus and cinnamon, with all trees of frankincense, myrrh, and aloes, with all choice spices— a garden fountain, a well of living water, and flowing streams from Lebanon*” (Song 4:13-15).
  - Therefore our lives are to be a sweet-smelling aroma, a fragrant offering that pleases the Lord. And we are to be the fragrance of Christ in the midst of unbelievers (2 Cor 2:15).
- All this, however, is not done in order to win Boaz by external beauty; for she is especially cautioned against allowing him to see her by day. But why this caution? Boaz was a believing Israelite, and therefore also a man of strict morals. It would have perplexed and displeased him to think that anybody else had seen Ruth, and might

suspect both her and himself of an illicit meeting on the solitary threshing-floor. He would have scarcely listened to her but removed her at once.

- **“and he will tell you what to do.” And she replied, “All that you say I will do.”** We hear in Naomi’s command to Ruth echos of the holy mother Mary, who knew to trust and obey the commands of her son, Jesus when instructing the wedding servants at Cana to do “whatever he tells you” (Jn 2:4).
  - Likewise, Ruth is to fully trust and obey whatever the kinsman-redeemer tells her. And by her willingness to obey both her mother-in-law and Boaz, Ruth is displaying fidelity and faith: “if you love me, keep my commandments (Jn 14:15).

## END OF WEEK 6

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 grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down.

- **She came in softly.** Literally translated: “And she went in secrecy”
  - She took her place at her feet similarly as she had done in the fields

8 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet!

- **The man was startled.** From ḥārad, which always denotes great fear and trembling; “the man was afraid” (KJV). “He turned” (NIV) is from lāpat, a rare word meaning “grasp, turn oneself.” Samson grasped the pillars to bring them crashing down (Jdg 16:29). Imagine Boaz’s trembling, twisting himself to see what or who was at his feet.

9 He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer.”

- **I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over...** As Ruth had made a decision to shelter under Yahweh’s wings she now asks Boaz to do for her what Yahweh has done. Here Boaz is in parallel relation to Yahweh as gō’ēl.
- **YHWH IS the True gō’ēl:**
  - As ‘Goel’, he attends to the covenant by which he bound himself to his people,
    - **Ex 15:13**, “Thou hast led in thy steadfast love (hessed) the people whom thou hast redeemed (gō’ēl)”
    - **Proverbs 23: 10-11**, 10 Do not move an ancient landmark or enter the fields of the fatherless, 11 for their Redeemer (gō’ēl) is strong; he will plead their cause against you.
    - **Isaiah 54: 4-5**, 4 Fear not, for you will not be ashamed; be not confounded, for you will not be disgraced; for you will forget the shame of your youth, and the reproach of your widowhood you will remember no more. 5 For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is his name; and the Holy One of Israel is your Redeemer, the God of the whole earth he is called. (cf. v.6)



- **Psalm 119:153-154**, 153 Look on my affliction and deliver me, for I do not forget your law. 154 Plead my cause and redeem me; give me life according to your promise!
- **Lamentations 3:58**, 58 O Lord, thou hast pleaded the causes of my soul; thou hast redeemed my life.
- **Jesus is our Kinsman Redeemer:**
  - **Mark 10:45**, For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.
  - **1 Timothy 2:6** who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time.
  - **1 Peter 1:18** knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,
  - **Revelation 5:9**, And they sang a new song, saying, “Worthy are you to take the scroll and to open its seals, for you were slain, and by your blood you ransomed people for God from every tribe and language and people and nation
  - **Luke 13:34**, O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often would I have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing!
- **“Spread your wings over your servant.”** This is sacramental in nature. The custom also comes with an accompanying sign or sacrament (outward sign of an invisible grace). The grace of God which comes to us comes visibly, tangibly, a physical token of an invisible grace (baptismal regeneration=water; eucharist=bread and wine; healing=chrismation (oil), etc).
  - Here, Ruth’s request for protection, redemption, is signified by the covering of goel’s robe.
  - in Ezekiel, Jehovah, speaking through the prophet, says to his bride Israel (ch. 16:8): “Behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread out my wing over thee, and covered thy nakedness,... and entered into a covenant with thee.”
  - As the chicken takes refuge under the wings of the hen, Ruth has hid herself under a corner of the coverlet of Boaz.

10 And he said, “May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

- **May you be blessed by the Lord.** His answer reveals the simple, unassuming soul of Boaz, whose modesty and sincere heartiness are truly admirable.
  - He makes no complaint of being disturbed in the night.
  - He entertains no thought of abusing the confidence of the woman, or taking advantage of her.
  - He has only words of divine benediction for the blameless and humble Ruth
- The natural response of the virtuous man is “blessing:
  - He blesses Ruth, whom like a father he addresses as “my daughter,” because he found her present kindness yet nobler and more beautiful than the former.
- **You have made this last kindness greater than the first.**



- *What was Ruth's first kindness?* In separating from her people and Moabite family to remain with Naomi, and care for her in desperate times.
- *What is last and why is it greater?* In seeking marriage protection from Boaz, an older man, she has secured the name and future inheritance of Elimelech's family.
  - The hessed of Ruth brought forth the grace and redemption of humanity found through faith in Jesus Christ, who, as St. John says, "came in grace and truth" (Jn 1:9)

11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. 12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.

- Boaz will not deny her who has come to himself to ask for the protection of his "resting-place." Her Moabitish nationality can offer no obstacle, since he has already commended her to the blessing of Jehovah. She has shown no Moabitish morals. There exists no ground for denying her the rights of Israel. For the whole gate of my people knows that thou art a brave woman. In the words "my people," he hints at the sole reason on which a refusal could base itself. But there is no Israelite among us in Bethlehem, who does not know how good thou art.<sup>1</sup> Whatever thou hast a right to claim, can be unhesitatingly done for thee, for thou art loved by all.

13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

- **If he will redeem you, good.** If that other person proves not able to fulfill his duty, then he himself will do it. This he confirms with an oath by the living God. Nor will she be required to repeat the proceeding of this night.
  - As a righteous and virtuous man, Boaz will uphold the law of Israel in all of its formality. But he will ensure that she is redeemed.

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

- **Lie down till morning.** He will not risk compromising Ruth's virtue by having her seen in clear daylight. Here we think of Joseph, the husband of Mary, who sought the best for his betrothed, that she might not be compromised by the divine conception of our Lord in her womb. Both in Joseph and Boaz, we are afforded a picture of what it means to be a man of God.

15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

- **Six measures of barley.** Note again the generosity and concern for Ruth AND Naomi. This gift of barley signifies the guarantee of his pledge to bring her into the fullness of blessing.

- Expositors have noted the number six as the symbol of labor and service, which is followed by seven, symbolizing the time of rest (Sabbath). Whoever has served six years, is released in the seventh (Jubilee). After so much labor, Naomi and Ruth are at the end of the sixth day. For the day of rest is at hand.

16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, “These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, ‘You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” 18 She replied, “Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today.”

- Now on the verge of rest, Ruth is to patiently await her redemption, as a bride betrothed awaits the bridegroom.
- We find instruction here. To be patient. To wait upon the Lord in faith for he will come and he will redeem (your soul, your life, your circumstances, your failures and fears)
- While Ruth rests, Boaz now moves into action, and will find no rest until Ruth receives the blessing of marital redemption, and Naomi’s family heritage is restored in the people of Israel.

**Final quote on the virtuous example of Boaz:** “Christian, behold the kindness and gentleness of Boaz! Will it then be possible that God, when thou art in need, will send thee empty away? Never! his generous hand is never closed. Only open Him thy heart, and divine gifts flow in upon thee, without any action on thy part.”

## END OF WEEK SEVEN

### Part 7: Boaz Redeems Ruth (4:1-12)

1Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, “Turn aside, friend; sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down.

- **Now Boaz had gone up to the gate.** The gate is where civil business occurred within Israel.
  - It was the place where the elders sat to mete out judgment at the entrances of the city; aware of all who entered and all who departed.
  - He sits as the custom for any who have business at hand, to await an encounter with the redeemer.
- **And behold, the redeemer came by.**
  - The name of this first *goel* is not given, and remains anonymous.
    - An ancient explanation is because the first *goel* was unwilling to raise up a name for his deceased relative.
    - Perhaps the narrator didn’t know it?

- However, it remains nonetheless an instructive fact that he who was so anxious for the preservation of his own inheritance, is now not even known by name!

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

- ***Naomi is selling the parcel of land.***

- According to Jewish custom, ten men were sufficient to form an appropriate number of witnesses.
- Naomi is a name renowned! She is the woman who returned bitter!
- Which explains her selling the family land. Naomi had become impoverished,—so she sold it.
- But, the name of Elimelech was still on the property: consequently, the law demanded its redemption so Boaz directs this demand to the nearest blood-relative.

4 So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.”

- ***Buy it in the presence... But if you will not.***

- First, Boaz lets the brother up front that he is willing to redeem if the man chooses to pass
- Second, Boaz asks nothing of the brother, that he is not willing to do himself
- ***I will redeem it.*** Notice, Boaz does not mention Ruth until after the anonymous relative answers.
- The man declares his readiness to buy back the land left by Elimelech, but his words do not indicate whether he is conscious of the further duties therewith connected.

5 Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.”

- ***Then Boaz said, “The day you.”*** The brother didn’t question or bring up the issue of Ruth in making his decision in vs. 4. So Boaz raises the issue of Ruth. Also, to be above board in front of the elders so that whatever occurs do so with integrity.
- ***In order to perpetuate the name of the dead.***
  - Ruth is the heiress of Mahlon, her departed husband; and no one can redeem her inheritance, without at the same time providing for the continuance of the name of the dead.
  - Consequently, the land was the joint possession of Naomi and Ruth.
  - And just because Ruth was part proprietress, the obligation existed not to let the names of Elimelech and Mahlon perish. The inheritance alone could not, therefore, be redeemed, as the anonymous relative proposed to do.

6 Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

- ***I cannot redeem it for myself.*** Why the sudden reversal?
  - “Moabites.” It must be her Moabite nationality that forms the ground, such as it is, of the kinsman’s refusal.
  - He realizes Elimelech’s misfortunes began with a journey to Moab; the death of Chilion and Mahlon to their marriage with Moabite women.
  - MOAB is what had endangered their inheritance.
  - The goel fears a similar fate! He thinks that he ought not to take into his house a woman, marriage with whom has already been visited with the extinguishment of a family in Israel.
  - To him, the law against intermarriage with Moabites, does not appear to be suspended in favor of Ruth.
  - He is unwilling to endanger his own family and inheritance; and as Ruth is a Moabite, he holds it possible to decline what in any other case he would deem an imperative duty.
- *What is to be learned from this anonymous redeemer?*
  - The man appears to be superstitious, and devoted to the letter of the law. He sees only its formal decisions, not the love that animates it.
  - He fears; but love knows no fear.
  - From anxious regard to the lower, he overlooks the higher duty.
  - He thinks of Moab; whereas Ruth has taken refuge under the wings of the God of Israel. He does not comprehend the difference of the conditions under which Mahlon once married her, and those under which he is now called upon to act toward her. He knows not how to distinguish times and spirits.
  - The legal severity which he would bring to bear on the noble woman, recoils on himself.
  - He is unwilling to endanger his name and inheritance, and—history does not even know his name.
  - While the guilt of Elimelech and his sons is removed through the love of Ruth, so that their name survives, his lovelessness toward Ruth is visited by namelessness.
  - What an honor does it award to love, and what a punishment does it hold out to the superstitious Pharisee!

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. 8 So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal. 9 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. 10 **Also 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.”

- The anonymous redeemer passes on his right to redeem. The drawing off of the shoe signifies his voluntary renunciation of his rights. He “passes” on Ruth.
- **Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon.**
  - In doing what the other redeemer would not, Boaz restores the house of Elimelech and secures its perpetuation in the people of Israel.
  - Boaz has no regard to whether his decision will damage his own inheritance; but hopes rather, while taking Ruth under his wings, to repair the evil which the journey to Moab has inflicted upon the house of Elimelech:
    - **Mt 15:24**, He answered, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”
    - **Rom 15:8**, For I tell you that Christ became a servant to the circumcised to show God's truthfulness, in order to confirm the promises given to the patriarchs, 9 and in order that the Gentiles might glorify God for his mercy. As it is written,
    - **Rom 11:27**, And in this way all Israel will be saved, as it is written, “The Deliverer will come from Zion, he will banish ungodliness from Jacob”;
    - **Tit 2:11**, For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, 12 training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age,
    - **Gal 6:14**, But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. 15 For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. 16 And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, **like Rachel and Leah**, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, 12 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.”

- **Like Rachel and Leah.** From Rachel and Leah came the tribes of Israel. As these built the house of Jacob, so, say the people may Ruth build her house!
- **Like the house of Perez.** The elders expect Yahweh will give to Boaz through Ruth, as God did to Judah through Tamar (Ge 38).
  - Tamar’s husband had died, and his brother Onan refused to impregnate her (like the anonymous redeemer); so through deception she stole her father-in-law Judah’s seed, producing Perez.
  - Ruth is compared with both Leah and Tamar, who proactively populated Israel despite uncooperative men, and the obstacle of barrenness which once Rachel had been!

## Part 8: A Son Is Born From Whom Will Come The Redeemer

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went into her, and the LORD gave her conception, and **she bore a son.** 14 Then the women said to Naomi, “**Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!** 15 He shall be to you **a restorer of life** and a **nourisher** of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.” 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.

- In the book of Ruth, the narration ascribes but two actions to Yahweh. In 1:6 he “visited his people by giving [nātan] them food”; and in 4:13 he “gave” (nātan) Ruth “conception.”
- **“Yahweh has not left you without a redeemer today”**
  - **1:12**, Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, 13 would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”
  - Contrast this night with **the day of 4:14:**
    - 4 Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! 15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”
  - **Night has turned into Day!** That is, the night of 1:12 has become the day of 4:14. Both scenes treat bearing sons; Naomi could not have sons for them (so they must “return”); now Obed is Naomi’s son, the “restorer”!
    - **Psalm 30:4-5**, Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. 25 aFor his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. 3 Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.

### The Genealogy of David

18 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.

- Redemption involves restoring all that has been lost.
- Everything Naomi lamented has now been answered by Yahweh.
- The family is restored. Elimelech’s seed and name are restored. Naomi’s life is now ward.

- The land is redeemed. Yahweh's people shelter under his wings to live faithfully before their God.
- "But most of all, Yahweh is inseparably identified with the Redeemer he raises up, whose land it is, whose seed it is, whose "wing" protects, whose covenantal fidelity and worth are brought to bear in such a way that not even death itself has the final word."
- This beautiful story of redemption of one family continues on and eventually produces David, the great king of Israel (4:17).
- This family story has become Israel's story, one in which the character and quality of God's mercy and hesed love. And it is the Church's story as well.
- Ruth magnifies The Lord's willingness and power to redeem all who find protection under his merciful wings. This is the gospel of Ruth.

**THE END**