

The Book of
Ruth

The story of redemption

Calvary Chapel Portsmouth

Study Notes on Ruth

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Calvary Chapel Portsmouth

Study Notes on Ruth

The following study notes (by Pastor Barry Forder) were used for Calvary Chapel Portsmouth's Thursday evening Bible studies during March-April 2013.

The notes have been 'tidied up' a little to make them easier to read and understand, and a few more comments have been added where appropriate.

Whilst every care has been taken with grammar and spelling, these are only notes and as such are not intended to be a literary classic!

As we will discover, the book of Ruth becomes more breath-taking the deeper you go. There is the 'surface text' i.e. the obvious story of the book, and then there are countless hidden models that we have only just scratched the surface of in this study.

Therefore, the real aim of these notes is to stimulate the reader to pursue their own diligent study of this book. There is no greater task that can be undertaken in this life than to seek to understand God's Word. All other achievements in the Christian life will bear much more fruit if they are firmly rooted in soil of God's Word. *"But he that received seed into the good ground is he that hears the word, and understands it; which also bears fruit, and brings forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty."* (Matt 13:23)

In order to make a clear distinction between the Biblical text, the notes and other comments, all the scripture verses being studied are in ***Bold italics***, other scripture quotes are in *normal italics*, and all notes by Barry are in normal black type. Where quotes from others are used, they are shown in this font.

As always, the reader is encouraged to be like the Bereans in Acts 17:11, who 'received the word with all readiness, and searched the scriptures

daily to see whether these things were so'. In other words, don't just take these notes as fact – check it out yourself. Let the word of God alone be the standard that you judge things by.

Study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman that needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

2 Timothy 2:15

The Book of Ruth - Introduction

The book of Ruth is considered one of the most beautiful stories in the Bible. The events recorded took place during the time of the judges, which was a period of national spiritual chaos and darkness where *'every man did that which was right in his own eyes'* (Judges 21:25) Against this background the book of Ruth stands out like a diamond on a black cloth, a beautiful day in the midst of a season of storms. However this book is far more than just a story of love and commitment. As we will discover, the key theme to the book is 'redemption'. One dictionary definition of 'redeem' is: *"to recover possession or ownership of by payment of a price or service; regain"*

On the surface we see the account of Naomi and her loss and subsequent regaining (redemption) of that which was lost. We also see the redemption of the land that had been sold, and the redemption and purchasing of Ruth by a kinsman-redeemer named Boaz. However, as we will see, the book also has another level. In Hosea 12:10 God says: *"I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets."* The word 'similitudes' means a 'type' or a 'model'. A model is simply a representation of something for our insight and instruction. The dictionary defines a similitude as follows

- 1. Similarity; resemblance. See Synonyms at likeness.*
- a One closely resembling another; a counterpart.*
b A perceptible likeness

For example, if we were to build something, we may well choose to construct a model to give us an idea of what the real, final completed project would look like. In Hosea God tells us that He has given us models through the words of the prophets of things that were yet to be.

The infamous twin towers of the world trade centre serve to illustrate this point: Before the original project began, the architects, Minoru Yamasaki Associates, Inc, built a scale model so people could see in advance what it would look like.



The real thing



Model

"A model is simply a representation of something for our insight and instruction."
Chuck Missler

If the surface story in the book of Ruth is wonderful, then the models that God has given us are nothing short of breath-taking! As we look at the similitudes we will begin to see how this book is a wonderful and powerful model that prefigures God's work of redemption and plan for mankind. Specifically we see how Naomi, as a type of Israel,

through unbelief and rejection of God is expelled from the land, being dispersed among the gentiles, later to be brought home in bitterness before being restored. We also see Ruth, as a type of the Church, being a gentile bride who finds grace in the eyes of Boaz who, as a Kinsman-Redeemer, is a type of Jesus. Then there is the land itself; as in the book of Ruth where the land was lost, only to be redeemed again by Boaz, so Adam lost the 'title deed' of this earth to Satan, only to find that the Second Adam, our Kinsman-Redeemer will redeem this earth as we see unfolded in the book of Revelation.

For a book that is only 85 verses long, it is truly amazing!

As we have noted, there are at least 3 levels to the book:

- 1) Firstly, it is an historical account of the events that took place at that time
- 2) Secondly, it serves as a tutor for all who read it in regard to commitment, faithfulness and trust. The lessons we learn here are practical instructions for everyday living.
- 3) Thirdly, it is a model laid out in advance of God's plan of redemption through Jesus.

In the 85 verses:

- ❑ God's name is used 17x (When you see LORD written in capitals it means that in the Hebrew it was written as YAWH, which we pronounce as 'Yahweh' or 'Jehovah' and was considered by the Jews to be the unpronounceable name of God.) 'the God who keeps His covenants'
- ❑ El hoeim is used x 3 (this is the plural for God and hints at the trinity – Father, Son & Spirit.) – 'the Creator God'
- ❑ El shadai x 2 – God almighty / all powerful
- ❑ Redeem / Redeemer / Kinsman over 20 x in just 85 verses.

Hence the theme of the book is established as the 'redemption by God'.

General notes about the book.

Timing: - As we have mentioned the events in the book of Ruth occurred during the time of the Judges (**Ruth 1:1**). Judges itself covers the period around 1400 – 1050 B.C. We know from the

genealogy in [Matthew 1](#) that Boaz's father was Salmon and his mother was Rahab – who was spared in the destruction of Jericho by Joshua. This would place these events fairly early on and probably around the time of chapter 3 – 4 of Judges. It is just a conjecture but we read in [Judges 3](#) that God raised up a man called Ehud to deliver Israel from the hand of the King of Moab. After Ehud's personal victory, we read in verses 27 – 30, how Ehud blew a trumpet in Ephraim and rallied an army that went and defeated the Moabites. It may have been that Elimelech, being from that area and old enough to fight, was part of the army that went into and conquered Moab. We are told that as a result of this victory: *“So Moab was subdued that day under the hand of Israel. And the land had rest fourscore years.”* ([Judges 3:30](#)) Given this situation, it would make sense that Elimelech, having already been to Moab on a military exercise, and in order to escape the famine now in Israel, chose to take his family to a land that Israel had subdued and was therefore under Israeli control at that time.

If this conjecture is correct, how ironic (and yet familiar in our own circumstances) that whilst being given a victory from God, Elimelech was impressed by the land of Moab, and hence it becomes the place he chooses to go to at this time. The blessing that God had given became the very thing that drove him and his family away from their God. How often have we enjoyed blessings from God's hand, only to let them become that thing that drives a wedge between us and God? Maybe you have prayed that God will give you a new job, but when you get it you find that now you are too busy to read the Bible or pray anymore, or attend church meetings; maybe you have prayed for a child, only to find that when God answers your prayer, unlike Hannah in [1 Samuel](#), you don't always go to church because you want to spend time with your family. The list goes on so fill in the blanks. Blessings that are not given back to God but kept for ourselves are like the manna that was taken and 'hid under the tent', they turn to rotteness. (See [Exodus 16:14-20](#))

Author? – Some think that it may have been Samuel and that one of the reasons for writing the book was to show the genealogy of King David as recorded in chapter 4.

Position of the book: It is interesting to note that the book is the eighth book in the Bible. Eight signifies new beginnings - 8th note in an octave is the start of a new octave; 8th day of the week is the start of a new week; 8th colour in the rainbow starts a new spectrum etc.

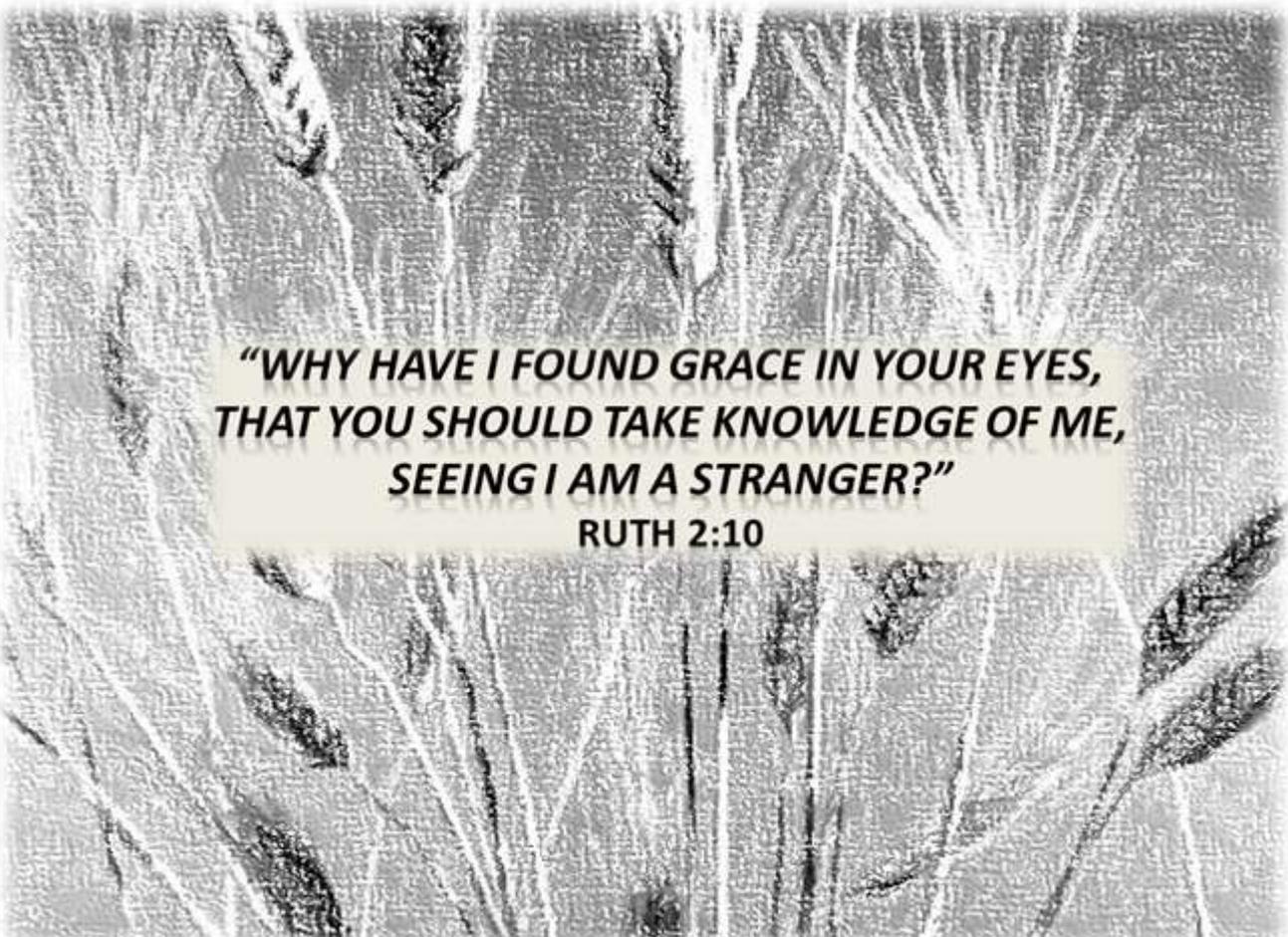
The book records a new beginning for Naomi, Ruth and Boaz and prophetically speaks of a new beginning for Israel, the Church and Jesus who will be united with His bride and begin to rule.

The book is a story of grace and bridges the gap between the darkness and chaos of the times of the Judges and the time when God's appointed king will be established in Jerusalem as recorded in Samuel. Again, viewed prophetically, the world was in spiritual darkness until Jesus came, who is the light of the world. Since the cross we are now living in a period of God's grace and are looking forward to God's appointed King of Kings to establish His throne and rule from Jerusalem.

Importance of the book: All scripture is God-breathed and is profitable for doctrine, reproof, correction and instruction in righteousness so that we might be thoroughly furnished – have all that we need – in order that we might do work of Him who called us. This book is no exception; there is abundant instruction here.

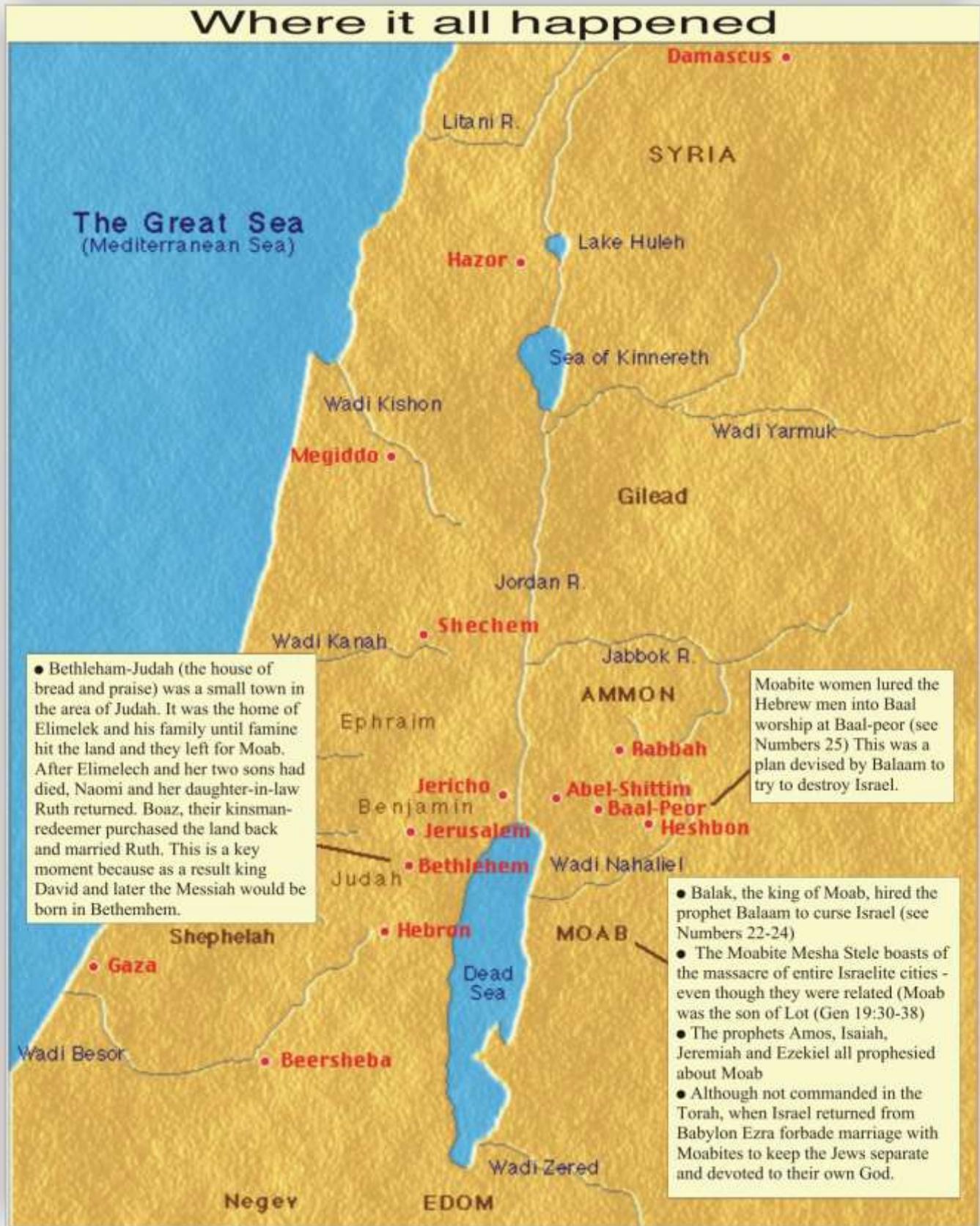
Without this book the reason why the Messiah was born in Bethlehem would not be known, and the field that the shepherds were in when the angels sang may have been unoccupied if it were not for the events that take place here. Again, as we have noted many times, this book serves to remind us that there are no meaningless details in the Bible. Every number, every word, every name and every place-name are all there by deliberate supernatural design proving once again that the Bible is the work of someone outside of our space-time who can tell the end from the beginning and from ancient times things not yet done!

([2 Timothy 3:16](#) / [Isaiah 46:10](#))



***“WHY HAVE I FOUND GRACE IN YOUR EYES,
THAT YOU SHOULD TAKE KNOWLEDGE OF ME,
SEEING I AM A STRANGER?”***

RUTH 2:10



The Book of Ruth Chapter 1

Ruth 1:1

Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

.....days when the judges ruled

“And when Joshua had let the people go, the children of Israel went every man unto his inheritance to possess the land. And the people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the LORD, that he did for Israel. And Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died, being an hundred and ten years old. And they buried him in the border of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the mount of Ephraim, on the north side of the hill Gaash. And also all that generation were gathered unto their fathers: and there arose another generation after them, which knew not the LORD, nor yet the works which he had done for Israel. And the children of Israel did evil in the sight of the LORD, and served Baalim:

And they forsook the LORD God of their fathers, which brought them out of the land of Egypt, and followed other gods, of the gods of the people that were round about them, and bowed themselves unto them, and provoked the LORD to anger.” (Judges 2:6-12)

This was one of the darkest periods in Israel’s history, and we find that our ‘certain man’ – Elimelech – also did what seemed right in his own eyes.

.....that there was a famine

In Deuteronomy 28:15, 23-24 God told Israel that if they did not obey Him He would set His hand against them; and one way that this would be seen was through famines. This famine was therefore a result of national disobedience.

There are seven natural famines in the land of Israel recorded in the Bible (excluding sieges) (Gen 12:10 / Gen 26:1 / Gen 41:54 / Ruth 1:1 / 2 Sam 21:1 / 1 Kings 18:2 / 2 Kings 8:1) Interestingly, the first 3 are the famines that occurred in the days of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob respectively. These were brought about by God achieve a desired end. The last 3 famines were

God’s judgment for Israel’s rebellion and unbelief. The famine in the book of Ruth is half and half. Partly it was a divine judgment, but also God engineered the circumstances to bring about His desired end. When we were studying this the observation was made that this echoes the Tribulation as detailed in the book of Revelation. In the first three and a half years of the Tribulation God will engineer the circumstances to bring about His plan; the final three and a half years are a specific judgment from God for man’s unbelief and rejection of Him. This is just another subtle model that we find hidden in the details of the Bible.

Famines always bring us to a point of decision (cf the prodigal Son. Luke 15:11-32). Whether it be a famine of food or another type of ‘famine’ in our lives. Chuck Missler says: *“We can’t conceive of a holy god wanting anything less than His very best for his children, and the very best He can give us is a holy character”* This is why God will allow ‘famines’ in our lives, in order that (as with the prodigal son) we might turn around and seek our Father.

We are living in the days of another famine right now, and it is forcing many to the point of decision: *“Behold, the days come, saith the Lord GOD, that I will send a famine in the land, not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the LORD:”*

(Amos 8:11)

The word of God is being alarmingly neglected in many churches across this country, and it is forcing those who really are seeking after truth to have to make a decision about whether they stay or go. The decision is simple; God says: *“Come out of her my people”* (Rev 18:4)

.....a certain man of Bethlehem-Judah

Bethlehem is ‘the house of bread’ yet there was no bread, and everyone did what seemed right in their own eyes, so Elimelech takes his family to Moab – God’s wash pot. *“Moab is my washpot; over Edom will I cast out my shoe; over Philistia will I triumph.”* (Psalm 60:8 / Psalm 108:9)

This is a picture of all of us. When we experience drought in our lives because we are not where God would have us, we run to ‘Moab’ in search of food, and as we will see with Elimelech, he died in Moab. The same will happen to us. *“Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a*

man soweth, that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.” (Galatians 6:7-8)

Remembering that there are no meaningless details in the Bible, we are told that a certain man lived in Bethlehem-Judah. Judah means ‘praise’ so we have ‘the house of bread and praise’! This is all we need in this life; bread – the word of God; and praise. Jesus said that we live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God; and we know that when we praise Him it gets our focus off of ourselves and onto Him – we then are able to see things from God’s perspective and not our natural perspective. This is why Isaiah says: “You will keep him in perfect peace whose mind is stayed on You”. (Isaiah 26:3)

.....sojourn in the country of Moab

Moab was the son of Lot and his daughter (See Gen 19:37). His descendants, the Moabites, caused real problems for Israel when they about to enter the promised land as recorded in Numbers 22 with the account of Balaam (and his donkey) who was hired by king Balak to curse Israel. Unable to curse Israel, Balaam counselled king Balak to lay a trap to ensnare Israel. Balak took the lovely young Moabite girls and got them to flirt with the young Israeli men which then caused them to be led into idolatry bringing God’s judgment upon them. (See Numbers 25)

Moab was a thorn in Israel’s side throughout the Old Testament, so much so that after the Babylonian captivity as recorded in Nehemiah 13, the Jewish men were forbidden to marry or have as wives Moabite women who once again were leading Israel into pagan worship and idolatry. Because of this God pronounces various judgments on Moab (See Isaiah 16 / Jeremiah 48 / Ezekiel 25 / Amos 2) but nevertheless says: “Yet will I bring again the captivity of Moab in the latter days, saith the LORD. Thus far is the judgment of Moab.” (Jer 48:47) God still has a plan for Moab, and we know from Daniel 11:41 that Moab will be one of the few places to escape the rule of Antichrist during the Tribulation.

Moab is located just to the east of Israel in what is known today as Jordan. It was the place where Moses looked across to the promised land just

before he died. He was buried by God in Moab. (See Deut 34:5).

Ruth 1:2

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.

As noted in the introduction, there is great significance behind each of these names, and the names throughout the book of Ruth reveal the Gospel – some 1500 years before Christ came!

Elimelech - God is my king

Naomi – Pleasure / Pleasant

Mahlon – Unhealthy

Chilion - Puny / Pining

(See study notes on the Models in the Book of Ruth)

Ruth 1:3

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

When we leave the ‘house of bread and praise’ (Bethlehem-Judah), when we lay aside reading God’s word and praising Him, ‘God is my king’ (Elimelech) dies in the place we have gone to.

We have been created to worship. If the worship of the one true God is abandoned in our lives it will be replaced by a false god – materialism, the desire for success, wealth, etc, etc. Psalm 115:8 tells us that we become like the god we worship. If we worship materialism or these other things we will become cold, unloving, uncaring, self-seeking. If however we worship the one true God, we will become like Him!

“As for me, I will behold thy face in righteousness: I shall be satisfied, when I awake, with thy likeness.” (Psalm 17:15).

“For whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of his Son” (Romans 8:29)

James tells us: “But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death” (James 1:14-15).

This is a spiritual law, as certain as the law of gravity, and it is precisely what happened to

Elimelech. The lust of the flesh – his desire for food in this case – drew him away from God, and brought forth death, not only in his own life, but also for his children. Parents should always be mindful of how their actions will affect their children. *“Be careful little feet where you go, because it’s the little feet behind you that are sure to follow”* – Casting Crowns (lyric from the song ‘Slow Fade’).

Ruth 1:4

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.

Although taking a Moabite wife was not prohibited under the law, it was certainly not ‘the done thing’. It is true that Israel were expressly told that they were not to take wives from the inhabitants of the land.....

“Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou goest, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: But ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: For thou shalt worship no other god: for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God: Lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land, and they go a whoring after their gods, and do sacrifice unto their gods, and one call thee, and thou eat of his sacrifice; And thou take of their daughters unto thy sons, and their daughters go a whoring after their gods, and make thy sons go a whoring after their gods.” (Exodus 34:12-16)

.....however, Moab, Edom and Ammon were distant cousins of Israel and not *‘the inhabitants of the land’*

In fact in Deuteronomy 2:9 we read: *“And the LORD said unto me [Moses], Distress not the Moabites, neither contend with them in battle: for I will not give thee of their land for a possession; because I have given Ar unto the children of Lot for a possession.”*

Later in Israel’s history, after the return from the Babylonian captivity, Nehemiah expressly commanded the men of Israel to put away their foreign wives: *“In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab: And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews’ language, but according to the language of each people. And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off*

their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves. Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin. Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?” (Neh 13:23-27).

The real sin here was that their alliance with the world had led them in to worshipping idols; and notice how they had even learned the language of the world and forgotten their own language. If we make alliances with the world, if we become unequally yoked (2 Cor 6:14), we will also start to forget the language of our homeland (Philippians 3:20), and the ways and thinking of this world will darken our thinking and speech:

“The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!” (Matt 6:22-23).

Ruth 1:5

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

Why they died is not explained. Some have said that it was because they married Moabite women, but as we have noted above, this was not prohibited under the law. Dake comments: *“One thing is clear from the law, that long life was promised if the law was obeyed, and the cutting off of life if it was disobeyed. (Lev 26 / Deut 28)”*. The fact that they were old enough to marry shows that they were old enough to make their own decisions, yet they willingly followed their father into the land of Moab. The Law said: *“The fathers shall not be put to death for the children, neither shall the children be put to death for the fathers: every man shall be put to death for his own sin”* (Deut 24:16). And Ezekiel poignantly records: *“But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, nor defile yourselves with their idols”* (Ezek 20:18).

Ruth 1:6

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.

Naomi's family did not patiently wait on the Lord, they were not there when God did end the famine. Also, as a result of this, Naomi had now lost her husband, her two sons and the land she once owned in Israel. Job notes how the lust of the flesh will root out all your increase (Job 31:12). Notice here that Naomi had received word that the LORD had ended the famine. He will never leave or forsake His people (Hebrews 13:5). If only she had trusted in God to provide in the 'house of bread and praise'.

Ruth 1:7

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.

It's the LORD's goodness, even when we were dead in trespasses and sins, and lost in a foreign land, that leads us to repentance. "Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?" (Romans 2:4).

See also Romans 5:5-8 / Eph 2:1 / Eph 2:12.

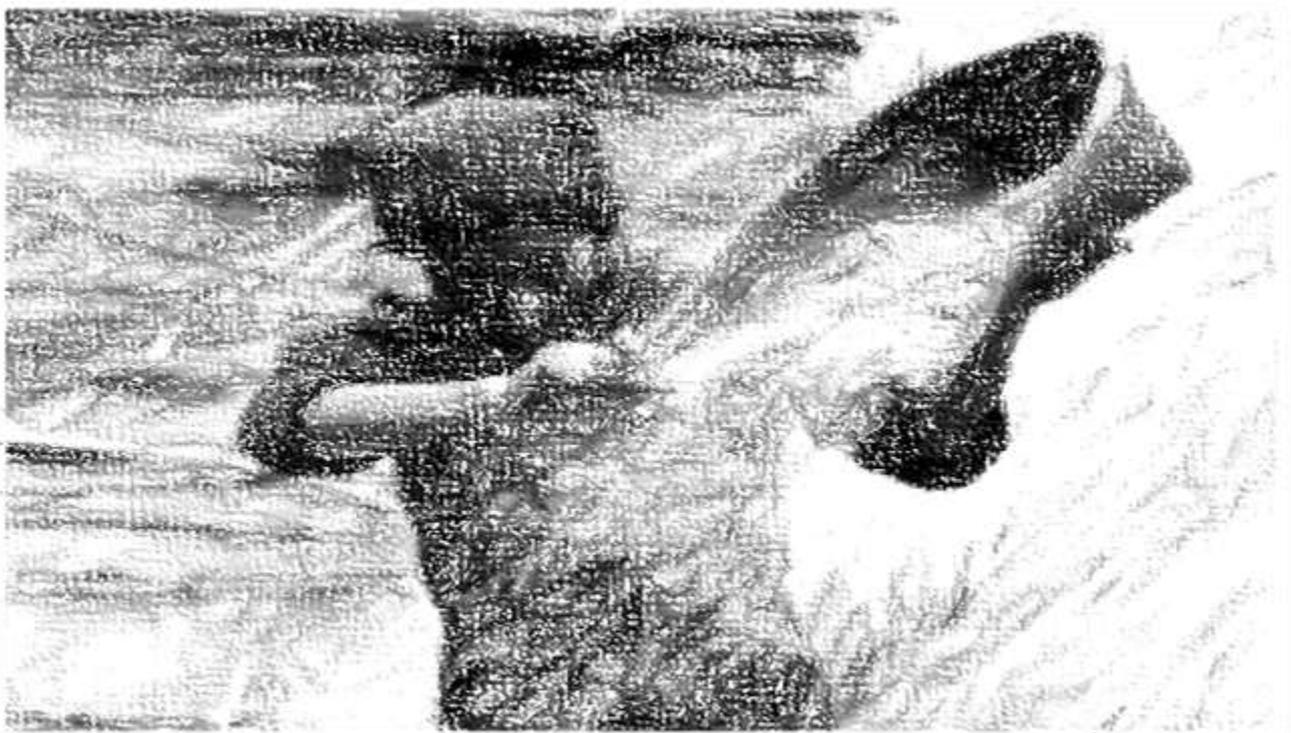
Ruth 1:8-9

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.

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.

They set off together but Naomi then says to her daughters-in-law "look I have nothing to return to, I have lost everything. Go back to your own families and start a new life, meet a new husband and settle down"

These girls had been through a lot together and parting was not easy, but this speaks of dying to the old life, counting all that you once thought gain to be loss compared to knowing Jesus (Philippians 3:8). Leaving the old life is not easy. We have built relationships, and have many memories, even family, but Jesus says: "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt 10:37-39). God extends His invitation to all who have ears to hear, but reminds us that the way is narrow, and there are few who find it. (Matthew 13:9 / Matthew 7:13-14).



Ruth 1:10-11

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

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?

What Naomi is saying here is that “unless I had more sons to redeem my inheritance, I can offer you nothing” – and she is not going to have any more sons at her age!

It was a Jewish custom that if a husband died, his next of kin would take the widow as his own wife and raise up children for his dead brother so that the family name would continue.

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel (Deuteronomy 5:5-10) (cf: Gen 38 / Mark 12:18-25)

However, in this case, there were no more ‘kinsman’ (so Naomi thought) who would be willing or able to do this. This also meant that the land that Elimelech once owned would also not be redeemed.

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold. And if the man have none to redeem it, and himself be able to redeem it; Then let him count the years of the sale thereof, and restore the overplus unto the man to whom he sold it; that he may return unto his possession. But if he be not able to restore it to him, then that which is sold shall remain in the hand of him that hath bought it until the year of jubile: and in the jubile it shall go out, and he shall return unto his possession”. (Leviticus 25:23-28)

Thus we have the law regarding the land. If no one is able to redeem it, it would stay in the possession of whoever had bought it from Elimelech until the 50th year – by which time Naomi might be dead, or

if not, with no offspring the land would pass to the nearest kinsman, either way, the girls would get nothing.

Ruth 1:12-13

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.

How often we think this way – completely missing what God is doing is for our good. Cf. Romans 8:28

And why is it that when we rebel against God, and reap the harvest we have sown, we blame God for our loss? Rather we should be grateful *“For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards, and not sons. Furthermore we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence: shall we not much rather be in subjection unto the Father of spirits, and live?” (Heb 12:6-9)*

Ruth 1:14

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

This is where many people turn away; when a decision has to be made between the old life and the new life.

Ruth 1:15

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.

How many people go back when faced with the real challenge to abandon the old life?

“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the

deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.” (Matt 13:20-22)

“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.” (Matt 16:24-25)

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh: That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh [this is like Orpah]; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit [as with Ruth].” (Rom 8:3-5)

Unless we live a disciplined life (this is what being a disciple is) and ‘sow to the spirit’ i.e. feed our spiritual appetite with the things of God – reading His word, praying, fellowshiping with other believers – we will automatically ‘sow to the flesh’ by default. *“So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God.” (Rom 8:8)*. Like Orpah we will turn back to our own gods. One of the most important lessons in the Christian life is that, no amount of desiring to be good will make us good; no amount of wanting to be holy will make us holy. This is because, as Paul explains in **Romans 7:19**, *“For the good that I would I do not: but the evil which I would not, that I do.”* On our own we are incapable of pleasing God because *“in me (that is, in my flesh,) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I find not.” (Rom 7:18)*

In desperation Paul cries out: *“O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”* Unless someone can help us we will remain slaves to the gods that want to control us. The good news is that someone can help us! *“I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God; but with the flesh the law of sin.” (Rom 7:24-25)*

Paul’s conclusion? – that God has put a new life, a new nature into us. We now have the choice which we are to obey - *“Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves slaves to obey, you are that one’s slaves whom you obey, whether of sin leading to death, or of obedience leading to righteousness?” (Rom 6:16-17)* Only when we surrender to the new life that God has put in us through His Spirit, and allow Him to ‘work out

what He has put in’ will we ever be able to ‘walk in the spirit and not fulfil the lusts of the flesh’ (See Gal 5:16)

Ruth now has a choice to make. She is under pressure and the temptation is laid out before her to return to her own gods – the familiarity, the comfort, the removal of accountability and expectation. We are tempted like this each day. It is so much easier to give in than stand firm. As for Ruth.....

Ruth 1:16

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: [she did not even want to have the temptation put before her] 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:

J Vernon McGee comments:

“I’ll tell you how important it is: the decision made that day will determine whether Jesus Christ will be born in Bethlehem or not. And if the right decision is not made, you might as well send word to the wise men not to come, because He won’t be born there. It may not look important to us, but a tremendous decision was being made.”

Continuing on from the comments for verse 15, Ruth chose to go God’s way. She chose to sow to the spirit and not the flesh. Did she have any idea how important this one decision would be? The next time you are faced with temptation, consider this example of Ruth. It is so easy to think that our actions done in secret will affect no one else ‘what does it matter, no one will find out’ – that is what Satan would have us believe. The truth is, as is demonstrated in the book of Ruth, our decisions when we are faced with temptations will have profound consequences – firstly on those we love, and also on God’s plan for our lives. *“So be careful how you act; these are difficult days. Don’t be fools; be wise: make the most of every opportunity you have for doing good. Don’t act thoughtlessly, but try to find out and do whatever the Lord wants you to.” (Eph 5:15-18 TLB)*

How important this decision was. If Ruth had turned back, the Messiah would not have been born in Bethlehem through this family line

Ruth 1:17

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.

Naomi must have been a good witness (even without knowing it). God will work through us in ways we do not see, so that He gets the glory. When you crush a fruit, what you get out is what was on the inside. When a Christian is crushed what comes out should be Christ. There was enough of God in Naomi's life for Ruth to have been so taken in by the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that she wanted this God to be her God.

There is an underlying belief in the resurrection from the dead seen here. The Jews (in general) had the hope that they would be resurrected at the last day. In Ruth's declaration that she wanted to be buried in the same place as Naomi we see a hint of her faith in the God of Israel to resurrect her also. J Vernon McGee comments:

The Israelite believed that someday he would be raised from the dead to live in that land. That was the hope of Abraham. He never believed that he was going to heaven. He believed he would be raised from the dead right down here, and that's the reason he bought the cave of Machpelah and buried Sarah there, and he himself was buried there. Isaac had that same hope, and even old Jacob, who died down in the land of Egypt, said he wanted to be buried back up there where his fathers were buried. This was because they had a hope of the resurrection of the dead. They were seeking "a city ... whose builder and maker is God" (Heb. 11:10), which will be a reality on this earth someday. That's the Old Testament hope. When the Lord Jesus said to His disciples in the upper room in John 14:2, "... I go to prepare a place for you" away from this earth, that was brand new, you see. God's promise to Abraham was to give him an eternal home on this earth. And Ruth said not only that where Naomi died she would die, but also, "And there will I be buried." You see, her hope is in that land—just as the hope of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had been.

Ruth 1:18

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

Oh may our prayer be that we too are so steadfastly minded to go God's way regardless of whatever else is competing for our affection or attention!

Ruth 1:19

So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem.....

This would have been about a 50 mile journey over mountainous terrain. How far are we prepared to travel to get back to the 'house of bread and praise'?

"....let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith" (Heb 12:1-2)

.....that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi?

There were no TVs in those days! It caused quite a stir coming back into a small town. The people may have even had word that Naomi was on her way back; after all Naomi had received word that the famine had ended.

Ruth 1:20

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

Some of the greatest people I know are people who have suffered incessantly through life. And through the suffering there has been a depth of character developed that is unparalleled by others who have never experienced suffering or sorrow. Out of suffering, out of sorrow, the roots can go deep into God and the life can become beautiful, and strong, and powerful. Or you can root into bitterness and your life becomes bitter and tight, and tense.

It's tragic when a person gives himself over to bitterness. It's all in how you look at the situation. I can look at it and I can become bitter and say, "If God loved me then why did He allow that to happen to me?" My life becomes tense, and I become tight, and my blood vessels begin to constrict and there's not a real flowing anymore. My whole life is so tense. I begin to actually get the effects of it physically.

Naomi for the moment was responding in the wrong way, "Don't call me Pleasant, call me Bitter!" Oh sad, that's sad when you've allowed the circumstances of your life to jaundice your feelings and you turn bitter against God, and bitter against the circumstances of life. Naomi thought it was all over. She thought that was the end of the road. She didn't know the plan God was working out. (Pastor Chuck Smith - Calvary Chapel Costa Mesa)

Ruth 1:21

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?

Notice the change of attitude? Naomi and her family had left the land because they feared the effects of the famine; they thought: ‘we’ve got nothing here, we might as well try our hand in the land of Moab’. Now Naomi realises that when she thought she had nothing she was actually full; and coming home she thought she would be full but instead she has lost all.

Again, God gets the blame for her decision to abandon Him and the consequences that followed as a result.

“He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.” (Psalm 91:1) – the key to remaining under God’s shadow is to dwell with Him.

Ruth 1:22

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.

Barley Harvest - Passover time - Spring

The Book of Ruth Chapter 2

Ruth 2:1

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

This is the type of verse that preachers like Spurgeon would have spent an entire sermon expounding! We must be careful not to just read over the magnitude of what this verse is saying, for it ultimately speaks of Jesus Christ. Psalm 40:7 tells us *“in the volume of the book it is written of me”*, and many Bible commentators have pointed out that you can find Jesus on every page of the Bible, either boldly presented, or subtly concealed in the types, shadows and details. Proverbs 25:2 says: *“It is the glory of God to conceal a thing: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter”*, and Paul explains, in regard to the feasts of Israel, that they too are *“a shadow of things to come; but the substance (i.e. the fulfilment) is of Christ”* (Col 2:17).

On the surface we are now introduced to the hero of the book of Ruth - Boaz. It seemed to have slipped Naomi’s mind that there was a relative who could, potentially at least, act as the kinsman-redeemer, to purchase back that which had belonged to Elimelech. As we will go on to see,



Boaz was a wealthy man and of great standing in the community, but it's when we turn to the types and shadows we see the depth in this verse.

We will break the verse into the four key facts that are revealed:

- 1) *Naomi had a kinsman,*
- 2) *He was a mighty man of wealth*
- 3) *He was of the family of Elimelech*
- 4) *His name was Boaz*

Firstly, *Naomi had a kinsman*: Later in the book we will not find Naomi complaining that she didn't have a number of able kinsmen who could have redeemed her, nor will she complain that it was too restrictive, narrow and dogmatic to only have been offered one way out of her predicament – a predicament that had been brought about by her decision to leave the Land God had given her, ultimately, the lust of the eyes, the lust of the flesh, and the pride of life (1 John 2:16). The incredible fact here is the Naomi *had* a kinsman, there was a way, it was possible for a sinner to be restored because there *was* a kinsman-redeemer! Of course this speaks of Jesus; He is The way, The truth and The life. None can come (back) to the Father but through Him (John 14:6). The world may foolishly complain that Christianity is too exclusive, that it is narrow and dogmatic to affirm there is just One way to heaven - through Jesus Christ, but the most amazing fact is, that there *is* A way. It is actually possible. We *have* a Kinsman; one who is able *and* willing to redeem us (purchase us back). Furthermore, our Kinsman came to rescue us while we were yet sinners, lost and alienated from the commonwealth of Israel (just as Naomi had been).

“For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him” (Rom 5:6-9).

“That at that time ye were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope, and without God in the world: But now in Christ Jesus ye who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ”. (Eph 2:12-13)

The second point to mention is that *‘he was a mighty man of wealth’*. Speaking of Boaz, we know that he was a wealthy land owner with a

number of servants, and also that he was a man of great importance within the town, and the Hebrew implies he was mighty in valour. But this verse also speaks of Jesus. You could have a mighty man who had little in the terms of wealth; or you could have a wealthy man who had little or no might, but our Boaz (Jesus Christ) is both Mighty and of unfathomable wealth. Not only do we have a Kinsman, but He is mighty to save (Isaiah 63:1); He is the captain of the armies of the LORD (Joshua 5:14), who will destroy His enemies with the brightness of His coming (2 Thess 2:8).

In regard to His wealth, Paul says: *“O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!”* (Rom 11:33) God's riches are not just confined to the material, and here Paul speaks of the unfathomable depth of the riches of both God's wisdom and knowledge. God is all knowing, all powerful and all wise. I wonder how poverty stricken Ruth felt to discover she was related to a philanthropist millionaire? How would you react to such a discovery? To discover that you have such a Kinsman in Jesus Christ, who is willing and able to redeem you, provide for you, establish you, and Whom will never forsake you, should fill your heart and mind with unspeakable joy and peace!

Paul also alludes to the future blessings reserved for those who are redeemed by our 'mighty Man of wealth' saying, *“The eyes of your understanding being enlightened; that ye may know what is the hope of his calling, and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints”* (Eph 1:18).

What does this mean? Just what will be the riches of the glory spoken of here? And what amazing blessings will we inherit in the ages to come? Paul adds: *“That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”* (Eph 2:7). This mighty Man of wealth is the one who has chosen us as His own. Our own inability and unworthiness is all too apparent, and Paul humbly declares, *“Unto me, who am less than the least of all saints, is this grace given, that I should preach among the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ”* (Eph 3:8).

How is it that Paul can preach something that is unsearchable? Is it not that the sheer magnitude of His riches are beyond our ability to search or estimate? We should be mindful too that Paul had

an insight none else have been afforded, for we read: *“And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) How that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter”* (2 Cor 12:3-4).

No doubt, among those unspeakable words Paul heard were expressions of Christ’s wealth and riches, so dazzling as to overwhelm Paul’s mind. But the wealth and riches of our ‘mighty Man of wealth’ are not just to be hoped for, but to be experienced now, for Paul’s prayer is *“That he would grant you, according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man”* (Eph 3:16), and he affirms: *“But my God shall supply all your need according to his riches in glory by Christ Jesus”* (Phil 4:19).

God’s riches exceed anything we can imagine. Even in this present world we know that *“every beast of the forest is mine, and the cattle upon a thousand hills. I know all the fowls of the mountains: and the wild beasts of the field are mine. If I were hungry, I would not tell thee: for the world is mine, and the fulness thereof”* (Psalm 50:10-12), furthermore, His is *“an everlasting dominion, which shall not pass away, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed”* (Dan 7:14).

We don’t just know someone who is related to a member of the royal family, or even that we are distantly related to royalty ourselves, we are joint-heirs with the King of Kings! *“The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together”* (Rom 8:16-17).

The third fact we are told is that Boaz was of the family of Elimelech. As we have noted, the name Elimelech means ‘God is my king’. Boaz was of the family of ‘God is my king’; his was a Godly family. His mother was Rahab, a gentile who had been saved by her faith in Yeshua. Although Rahab had once been known as a harlot, even by the time we are introduced to her in the book of Joshua, there is evidence that her life was changing, for we are told she was drying flax in the roof of her house, and this was time consuming and would have been to produce garments for sale, to earn her living in a more honourable way (linen etc. was made from flax). Rahab’s encounter with

the God of Israel changed her forever, and as Jesus Himself testified of another ex-harlot *“Wherefore I say unto thee, Her sins, which are many, are forgiven; for she loved much: but to whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little”* (Luke 7:47). As with Boaz, Christ also is of the family of ‘God is my King’. God alone was His King; He came to do the will of His Father (John 5:30 / 6:38). Only one who seeks first the kingdom of God can be truly pleasing to Him (Matt 3:17 / Matt 6:33).

Finally, we are told that *‘his name was Boaz’*. Boaz’ name means ‘to strengthen’. You can mix sand, stones and water together all day long and you will have a soggy mix of sand, stones and water. However when you add cement to your sand, stones and water you have something that you can make the largest buildings from. This is what Christ does for us. He puts into us something that was not there before. *“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”* (Phil 4:13). Christ is our strength, and His strength is made perfect in our weakness (*1 Peter 5:10 / 2 Corinthians 12:9*). He was strong enough to endure temptation in the wilderness, to endure the trial in Gethsemane, to endure the mockery and scourging of the Pharisees and Romans, to endure the agony and humiliation of crucifixion, and ultimately to endure the wrath of God poured on Him for the sins of the world. What strength! What a Saviour!

“For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds” (Heb 12:3).

Boaz must have made an impression on his great grandson, Solomon, for when Solomon was building the temple *“ he reared up the pillars before the temple, one on the right hand, and the other on the left; and called the name of that on the right hand Jachin, and the name of that on the left Boaz.”* (2 Chron 3:17) Jachin means ‘to establish’, and Boaz, ‘to strengthen’.

Ruth 2:2

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.

Ruth decides to go and try to do something about the situation. Her request to Naomi is based upon a provision in the Law of Moses as is seen by the following scriptures. However what is interesting is that it is Ruth that makes this request. Did she

know what the Jewish Law said? Had Naomi told her daughter-in-law about the law of Moses? Certainly she should have done, see Deut 6:6-7.

The Law of gleaning - Lev 19:9-10

“And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather every grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger: I am the LORD your God.”

The Law of gleaning - Deut 24:19-22

“When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands. When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow. And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.”

Ruth 2:3

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.

She ‘happens’ on the field of Boaz the son of Rahab. It has been said that “coincidence is when God chooses to work anonymously.”

This is one of those verses where we detect God’s sense of humour, for He says in effect: *‘it just so happened that Ruth.....’* There is no chance to this event, for it had been foreordained by the God who knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:9-10). *“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and he delighteth in his way.”* (Psalm 37:23)

An important lesson can be learnt from this situation: So often we strive to know what God’s will is for us. We look for the miraculous but seldom find the answer there. It comes in the ordinary everyday situations that we find ourselves in. Elijah sought the Lord and there came a great and strong wind, than an earthquake and then a fire; but God was in none of these. Then there came avoice. Just a voice. God could have

thundered from the heavens but he just spoke to him. (1 Kings 19:11-12)

Ruth evidently believed that God would provide. She had faith. But as James reminds us, faith without works is dead. *“What doth it profit, my brethren, though a man say he hath faith, and have not works? can faith save him? If a brother or sister be naked, and destitute of daily food, And one of you say unto them, Depart in peace, be ye warmed and filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works. Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead? Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God. Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only. Likewise also was not Rahab the harlot justified by works, when she had received the messengers, and had sent them out another way?”* (James 2:14-25)

Boaz’s mum demonstrated her faith by her works, and so does Ruth. Seeing Ruth acting on her faith no doubt caused Boaz though about his mum, who was also a gentile who had chosen to serve the God of Israel. (cf Ruth 2:11)

God has a corner in every field where He has made provision for you right now, no matter how difficult things are, God has made provision. Through understanding God’s word Ruth knew what she must do. The same is true for us.

Ruth 2:4

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

We have already noted in our study that Boaz came from a Godly family, and it is again evidenced in his greeting when he arrives at work. He greets his staff in the name of YHWH, the name that God revealed to Moses at the burning bush *“I am JEHOVAH, and I appeared unto*

Abraham,... by the name of God Almighty (El-Shaddai), but by My name JEHOVAH was I not known". We should seek first the kingdom of God, and this applies to our daily/work lives also.

This verse also tells us that Boaz' field was just outside the town, and some have speculated that it could have been in the same place certain shepherds, many years later, were looking after their sheep when they were visited by an Angelic host announcing the birth of the Saviour.

Ruth 2:5

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

As any good boss would do, Boaz brings himself up to speed with all that is happening that day. Suddenly he notices a girl who he has not seen before. Is this love at first sight?

Note: Boaz notices Ruth before she knows who he is. "You have not chosen me but I have chosen you...." (John 15:16)

Also notice in the next verse that it is an unnamed servant introduces the bride to the groom!

Ruth 2:6-7

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

At the point Boaz arrives, Ruth is taking her first break of the day, and the servant remarks how Ruth had arrived that morning and asked permission to glean after the reapers. Her dedication and commitment had also been noted, and (presumably) the servant had entered into conversation with Ruth – maybe to check out her eligibility to glean? – for he knew of her journey from Moab back to Israel with Naomi, and actually refers to her as *the* Moabitish damsel – as if the talk of her had spread around town.

It is important to note that Ruth had to acknowledge her own poverty and humbly seek the favour of this 'mighty man of wealth'. Only when you acknowledge your own poverty and need, and humble yourself are you able to come and plead before your Redeemer.

Ruth 2:8-9

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:

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.

Boaz now goes over to the place where Ruth was resting. Her heart must have skipped a beat! This was Boaz, the 'mighty man of wealth', yet Boaz makes it clear that he wants her to stay and glean in his field, and he will personally vouch for her safety, and she can drink freely of water she has not drawn. He makes the first move!

Once again, this is what Christ has done for us, shown us grace and mercy, allowing us to drink freely of water we have not drawn: "Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw" (John 4:13-15).

Ruth 2:10

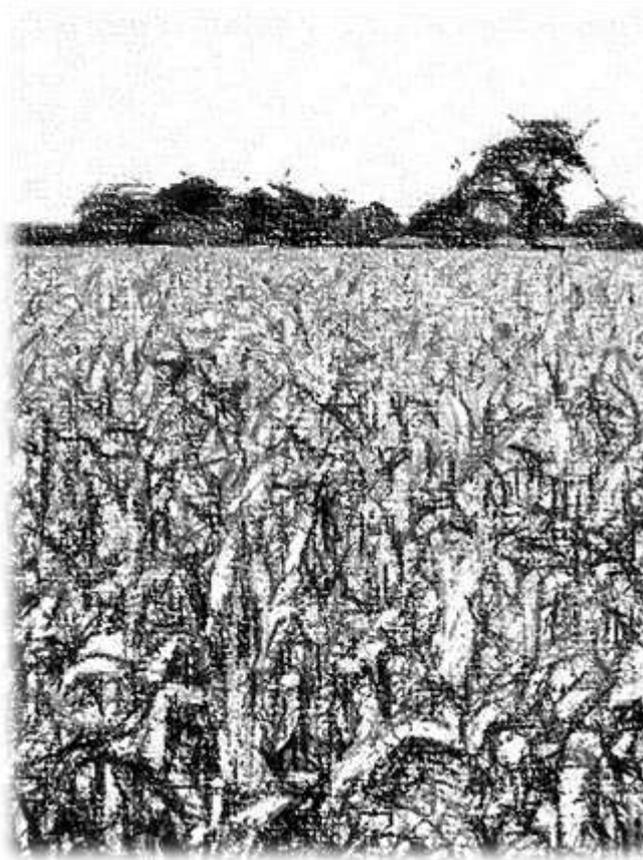
Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

Her response was as ours should be. This question is as applicable to us today as it was to Ruth.

Why? 'What is the reason that you have done this for me?' Because it pleased him. (cf Psalm 8:4) Have I? 'Because you have become the object of My affection'.

Found Grace? Because I have in abundance what you need and it pleases Me to give it to you. In Your eyes? Ruth acknowledges just who this man is – which makes the above even more overwhelming!

Just like Ruth, we were strangers, but not only has God brought us into His field and protected and provided for us, He has poured His grace upon us and made us part of His family!



Ruth 2:11

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.

Remember those little things that you thought no one noticed? God sees.

Boaz had obviously done his homework because he says *‘It has fully been shown to me all that you have done.....’*. He then recounts her history! This must have been a surprise to Ruth, after all, it was ‘only by chance’ that she happened to come and work in that field that day!

This is how it is for us when we come to Jesus, *“Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?”* (John 4:29). When we come to Jesus he already knows everything, so He can’t be disappointed by finding out what we are really like. Nothing we do will be a surprise to God – it may shock us at times! – but God know all things, *“bears all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.”*

(1 Cor 13:7) – and the amazing thing is that love never fails, God doesn’t give up on us because He sees us how we can be in Christ.

Ruth 2:12

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.

Her decision to follow the God of Naomi was not in vain. Boaz prays that God will give her a full reward – which, as we will see, He does. Jesus said: *“Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel’s, But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the world to come eternal life.”* (Mark 10:29-30)

Ruth 2:13-14

13 Then she said, Let me find favour in thy sight, my lord; for that thou hast comforted me, and for that thou hast spoken friendly unto thine handmaid, though I be not like unto one of thine handmaidens.

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.

Boaz invites Ruth to come and eat at His table, and notice what they are having: bread and wine – the vinegar is a grape juice, ‘fruit of the vine’. This should remind you of another kinsman-redeemer who has made the same invitation to us. (Matt 26:29)

Boaz then waits on her, maybe to get a closer look at her without making it too obvious!

Ruth 2:15-16

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:

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.

If Boaz carries on like this, people are going to start talking! He is being particularly kind and showing an unusual amount of interest in this young lady. Love does this – it make us go out of our way. Do you remember some of the crazy things you did when you were first in love?

There are handfuls of purpose all around us too – the ‘just so happens’ that God sees are left for us. God loves us so much that He does this for us all the time; the little things, the ‘coincidences’ at the right time and right place.

Ruth 2:17

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

7 bushels – a lot more than she would have expected to be bringing home! If we choose to glean in the field of our Kinsman, we too will have an abundance.

“Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,” (Eph 3:20)

Ruth 2:18

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.

So Ruth beats out the barley and takes it home; but notice that when she gets home that Naomi can’t help but see what Ruth has got, but then Ruth ‘brings forth’, ie’ gets out that which she had reserved after she was satisfied. When was Ruth satisfied? When she had lunch with Boaz. So out of the abundance that Boaz had provided she has brought home a packed tea for Naomi – Love is not selfish.

Out of our abundance we too should bless others – we automatically think money, but we have receive countless spiritual blessings that was have freely received, and we should freely give. (Matt 10:8)

Ruth 2:19

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.

It’s been a great day but remember that Naomi has been at home all day, no doubt worried sick about Ruth, probably expecting the worse. But when Ruth comes home grinning from ear to ear (if you pardon the pun!) Naomi bursts into life – she is happy for possibly the first time in the book! How often do we doubt God’s provision, sitting at home

and moping, rather than acting in faith and gleaning what God has provided for us?

At this stage Ruth doesn’t yet know who Boaz is – other than a powerful and rich good looking guy with a big field and lots of servants.

Ruth 2:20

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.

The lights go on for Naomi – ‘why didn’t I think of this?’ Naomi not only remembers Boaz, and recalls his kindness in the past to her family; but it also dawns on her what this could mean. According to the law of redemption (Lev 25:47-50), and the law of Leverite marriage (Deut 25:5-10), Naomi realises that there is both a way for Ruth to marry again also to regain the family land. Suddenly things are looking brighter!

The law of Leverite marriage meant that because Boaz was next of kin to Ruth’s deceased husband, he could, in fact he was obligated, to take Ruth as his wife and raise up children in the name of Ruth’s deceased husband. Three requirements had to be met for this to happen: firstly, he had to be a kinsman – no problem there. Secondly, he had to be willing – although it was ‘the done thing’ it was not mandatory, so he did not have to. Thirdly the request had to come from Ruth.

We too have a Kinsman-Redeemer who is able and willing to redeem us, but the request must come from us!

See also Jeremiah 25 for another example of the right of redemption

Ruth 2:21

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.

Ruth, obviously excited by this news tells Naomi ‘He wants me to go back again!’

It is worth noting that Ruth doesn’t brag to Naomi about all the nice things that Boaz had said about her. Love does not boast.

Ruth 2:22

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.

In the previous verse Ruth says that she has been invited to work along side Boaz' young men. Naomi has a better idea – keep close to the girls instead. Whether Ruth realises it yet or not, there is only one man for her, and Naomi thinks she knows who!

Oswald Chambers says: "It is only the loyal soul who believes that God engineers circumstances. We take such liberties with our circumstances, we do not believe God engineers them, although we say we do; we treat the things that happen as if they were engineered by men. To be faithful in every circumstance means that we have only one loyalty, and that is to our Lord. Suddenly God breaks up a particular set of circumstances, and the realisation comes that we have been disloyal to Him by not recognising that He had organised them. We never saw what He was after, and that particular thing will never be repeated all the days of our life. The test of loyalty always comes just there. If we learn to worship God in the trying circumstances, He will alter them in two seconds when He chooses."

Naomi had started the day like Eeyore – sad and gloomy, not trusting that God was in control of the circumstances. Before the day had ended she was enjoying God's provision and planning a wedding.

Each day God will find a way of asking you one question: 'Do you trust Me?'

Ruth 2:23

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.

Ruth does just as Naomi suggests and goes back each day until the end of the harvest.

I'm sure Boaz was as pleased to see her arrive each day as she was to get there. The harvest season would have lasted for up three months.

Love is patient.

The Book of Ruth Chapter 3

Ruth 3:1

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?

Naomi is genuinely concerned about Ruth's future happiness so poses the question 'My dear Ruth, have you thought of getting remarried and settling down?'



It is interesting that we find Naomi use the expression ‘seek rest’ as an idiom for marriage. Throughout scripture the idea of rest is prophetically linked to the marriage of the Bride and our Heavenly Groom. The ultimate rest will be found in Him, when we are joined to Him and free from the toil and trials of this world. The Hebrew word for rest is ‘manowach’ (maw-no'-akh); which literally means ‘quiet’, i.e. (concretely) a settled spot, or (figuratively) a home. This is how a marriage should be, a place of loving fulfilment and peace.

As Matthew Henry comments: *“A married state is, or should be, a state of rest to young people. Wandering affections are then fixed, and the heart must be at rest.”*

Sadly, we are bombarded with the world’s view of marriage as a place of strife and turmoil, where dreams go to die and to endure is the best we can hope for.

Love is hard to conceal and it may well have been that Naomi had already noticed a spark between Ruth and Boaz, after all, it would seem they had spent a couple of months daily in each other’s company by this point in time. Ruth however, being a foreigner, would no doubt have felt it not her place to initiate anything with her wealthy relative. This is the way in which we must come to Christ, knowing our poverty and dependence upon Him alone.

In this verse we should also notice also the actions of a loving parent in seeking a godly partner for their child.

“And be it always remembered that is best for us which is best for our souls.” - Matthew Henry.

Ruth 3:2

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

“Have you though about Boaz? He’s a nice handsome (rich) man!” ‘I’ll tell you what you could do, if you like – no pressure though, it’s just that....’ – Have you ever known people that like to match-make? It is a dangerous pastime unless the Lord’s hand is in it.

However in this case Naomi had obviously been doing her own homework; so much so that she had

got a copy of the threshing floor schedule, and guess who’s on duty tonight!

The threshing floor was typically found on the top of a hill where the wind was blowing. The grain was first crushed under the sled (‘tribulem’ in Latin from whence comes our word for ‘Tribulation’ meaning to be crushed). After the grain was threshed it would be thrown in the air, the chaff would be blown away downwind but the grain itself would fall onto the threshing floor ready to be gathered up.

It is at the ‘threshing floor’ that we too must fall before the feet of our Redeemer and throw ourselves upon His mercy and grace. Here we are threshed by the word of God that is able to divide between body, soul and spirit (Hebrews 4:12). *“That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.”* (John 3:6).

“Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; neither doth corruption inherit incorruption.” (1 Cor 15:50)

Ruth 3:3

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.

Most girls can look good when the occasion demands. Ruth would have probably figured this part out herself. I daily see an amazing transformation in my commute to work. Ladies board the train looking a little bleary eyed and like they would rather have stayed a little longer in bed; but then the make-up bag comes out and they set to work. At the other end of the journey I look up from my laptop and a different person is sitting opposite me! There is actually a spiritual lesson in this too, and that is that we look better with our ‘coverings’, which for a Christian should be Christ. We are to be clothed with Him (*“For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ”* Galatians 3:27 / also Romans 13:14). This will change our outward appearance and also the inward person that ordinary cosmetics cannot ‘repair’.

In the Garden of Eden, man was originally clothed with the glory of God, but when sin entered, the glory was removed and man was suddenly aware of his nakedness (Genesis 3:7,11). Man’s attempt

was to try to provide his own covering, by sewing fig leaves together, but whilst this may have gone some way to preserving their modesty, it did not address the real issue, that they were now ‘spiritually naked’. God’s remedy was to clothe them with the skins of animals (Genesis 3:21), and this meant the shedding of blood. In 2 Corinthians 5 Paul tells us *“For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. For in this we groan, earnestly desiring to be clothed upon with our house which is from heaven: If so be that being clothed we shall not be found naked. For we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened: not for that we would be unclothed, but clothed upon, that mortality might be swallowed up of life”* (2 Cor 5:1-4). The new bodies that Paul refers to here will be supernatural bodies, fit for eternity and clothed with the glory of God once again; *“He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels”* (Revelation 3:5 – see also 2 Chronicles 6:41).

Naomi, having been married long enough to have had two grown up children then offers Ruth some good advice: ‘Wait ’till he’s finished eating!’ – a man’s ears work better when his stomach is full!

Ruth 3:4

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.

It was traditional that after beating the barley on the threshing floor at the end of the harvest, when the chaff and wheat were separated, there would be a feast, a reward for the workers. It would also be normal to sleep at the threshing floor for the night to protect the crop from thieves. Naomi, confident that Boaz knows all about the law of Levirate marriage, gives Ruth instructions stating that ‘Boaz will know what to do’. When we come to Christ, all we have to do is to come and fall at His feet!

Ruth 3:5

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

There is no opposition to this plan from Ruth – and you get the feeling that she wasn’t just doing this for Naomi! All that Naomi, this Jewess moved by

God declares, Ruth (this gentile bride) says she will obey.

We have recorded in a Jewish book what Jews moved by God wrote ‘aforetime for our learning and instruction’ that it may be well with us (Rom 15:4 / 2 Tim 3:16) – are we as willing to heed the instruction as Ruth was?



A typical threshing floor

Threshing floors were usually found at the top of a hill so that the wind would blow the chaff into a pile downwind, but the heavier grain would fall and get caught against the wall. It would be usual to have a celebration after the threshing was completed and then sleep that night at the threshing floor to protect the grain from thieves.

Ruth 3:6-8

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

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.

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

Ruth in humility and obedience goes to lay at Boaz’ feet. But suddenly in the dead of night, Boaz realises he is not alone. This was no doubt a big surprise to Boaz and the last thing he was expecting!

The expression ‘his heart was merry’ doesn’t mean that he was drunk, but simply that he was content, satisfied and cheerful after a good harvest had been gathered in, and a well-earned meal had been enjoyed.

Ruth 3:9

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.

Contrary to what some have thought about this verse, Ruth is actually asking Boaz to fulfil the role of the kinsman-redeemer, she is asking him to marry her!

Throughout scripture the idea of the skirt or hem of a garment is used to symbolise authority.

Cf: 1 Samuel 24 David cuts of the hem of Saul's robe. Also Matt 9:20 / Matt 14:36

What Ruth is asking Boaz is to come under his authority.

God says the same of Israel in Ezekiel 16:8: *“Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.”*

Ruth 3:10

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.

Boaz is genuinely taken back by this, after all, Ruth is an attractive young girl, Boaz is a middle age man. Boaz would also realise the effect that this would have on Naomi, and in this respect it was an act of kindness on Ruth's part.

Ruth 3:11

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.

Boaz said yes! Ruth was obviously the talk of the town, and Boaz remarks that she is virtuous – an essential qualification for a godly wife. See Proverbs 31:10-31.

Ruth 3:12

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

In the previous verse Boaz tells Ruth that he will 'do all that Ruth requires'; in other words get you a husband, hopefully me, but.... (this is not what we want to hear!), there is apparently someone else in line before Boaz.

Ruth 3:11

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.

Boaz' hands were tied by the law. If by following the law and legal requirements Ruth remained 'unredeemed', Boaz says that he will (gladly) perform the part of a kinsman..

“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh.” (Rom 8:3)

We were bound by the law, but the law could never redeem us. But praise God that through His grace, Jesus made a way to take us for His own, paying the price and setting us free from the law.

Ruth 3:14

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.

We are here told how Ruth was dismissed by Boaz. It would not have been safe for her to go home in the dead of the night; therefore she lay at his feet (not by his side) until morning. But as soon as ever the day broke, that she had light to go home by, she got away, before one could know another, that, if she were seen, yet she might not be known to be abroad so unseasonably. She was not shy of being known to be a gleaner in the field, nor ashamed of that mark of her poverty. But she would not willingly be known to be a night-walker, for her virtue was her greatest honour, and that which she most valued. Boaz dismissed her, 1. With a charge to keep counsel (Rth 3:14): Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor, and lay all night so near to Boaz; for, though they needed not to care much what people said of them while they were both conscious to themselves of an unspotted purity, yet, because few could have come so near the fire as they did and not have been scorched, had it been known it would have occasioned suspicions in some and reflections from others. Good people would have been troubled, and bad people would have triumphed, and therefore let it not be known. Note, We must always take care, not only to keep a good conscience, but to keep a good name: either we must not do that which, though innocent, is liable to be misinterpreted, or, if we do, we must not let it be known. We must avoid not only sin, but scandal. – Matthew Henry

We are to be living epistles to be read by men (2 Cor 3:2), that they may see our good works and glorify our Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16). We must not, by our actions put a stumbling block in the path of others (1 Cor 9:9) that it does not have

a detrimental impact on their walk (1 John 2:10) or our ministry (2 Cor 6:3). We are ambassadors of our King (2 Cor 5:20) on a diplomatic mission to this world; therefore we are to represent Him and give a good account of ourselves in all things, that the name of our God and His doctrine be not blasphemed (1 Tim 6:1).

Whilst maybe to us, Ruth puts herself in a compromising situation by going to Boaz at night, we must not use this as justification to ‘put ourselves in harm’s way’. If we pray as we are told ‘deliver me from evil’ we must also “avoid even the appearance of evil” (1 Thes 5:22), i.e. we must not put ourselves in a place where evil can appear, or as Paul puts it, we must not ‘give place to the Devil’ (Eph 4:27), ‘make no provision for the flesh to fulfil its lusts (Romans 13:14). Spurgeon once said, that ‘of the choice of two evils, choose neither!’.

Ruth 3:15

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.

Why six measures? – we’ll find out in a moment. This would weigh about 60Lbs!

Ruth 3:16

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.

Who art thou? The question Naomi is asking is ‘Are you Mrs Boaz?’ ‘Can I get a new wedding outfit and hat?’ They sit down over a cuppa and Ruth tells Naomi everything – women like talking, especially on subjects like this one!

Ruth 3:17

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

Boaz sends only six measures to communicate his intentions to Naomi, which she understands straight away.....

Ruth 3:18

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 cracks the code – six is not complete, Naomi tells Ruth that she can now do nothing. She has asked Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer, now it’s all up to him. She is powerless – Once we have

asked Jesus to be our Kinsman-Redeemer, we too are powerless, it’s all in His hands! – that is such a relief because if it were up to us we would mess it up!

The Book of Ruth Chapter 4

Ruth 4:1-2

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.

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

In ancient cultures the city gate was like the town hall, the council office, where decisions were made; it was a place of council, debate and discussion. It would appear that Boaz was no stranger here and was known to all, which should come as no surprise as back in chapter 2 we were introduced to Boaz as a ‘mighty man of wealth’ (2:1); Boaz was one of the leaders in the community.

Although the relative is not identified by name, Boaz obviously knew him, hence his greeting and the willingness of the kinsman to sit down at Boaz’ request.

As an aside, Jesus said that the gates of hell would not prevail against the Church (Matt 16:18). By this is meant ‘the councils’, the schemes etc. of hell will not prevail against the Church. Just as with Samson, who took the gates (i.e. the wisdom, authority and power) of the Philistines to the top of the hill and thus demonstrated his superiority over them, so our Samson carried the ‘councils of hell’ to the top of another hill in a public demonstration of His power and victory.

Ruth 4:3-4

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

Both Boaz and the kinsman were related to Elimelech’s side of the family.

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

Boaz put it to him straight. *‘Naomi has got some land, if you want it you have first refusal because you are the next of kin’*. This underlines the fact that the redeemer had to be a family member. The kinsman gladly accepts – who wouldn’t say yes to some additional property, especially in that culture? However this is not the result we all want! Boaz is supposed to be the hero of the story but this near kinsman says that he will redeem the land. However.....

Ruth 4:5

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

Boaz now gives the small print and tells the kinsman that as part of the responsibility of a kinsman required by the Law would be that he would also have to marry Ruth, have children with her, the firstborn of which would then inherit the land. People are always willing to receive that which benefits them, but when there is a cost or sacrifice involved the hands go down.

Ruth 4:6

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

The nearer kinsman makes it quite clear that he cannot / will not risk his own inheritance. *“Why don’t you do it?”* he says to Boaz!

This helps us to see the commitment required in doing this. Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer has to be prepared to lay aside his right to have his firstborn carry on his own family line in order to raise up a child for the relative who had died. Boaz’ first child would be counted as the offspring of Ruth and her late husband, and therefore inherit all that was Elimelech’s. Notice the deliberate parallel with Jesus who gave up the majesty and glory of heaven to come and redeem us, to raise up children for Adam who had died – and purchase back the land in the process! *Philippians 2:7* tells us that Jesus *‘made himself of no reputation’* for us. Both Boaz and Christ were willing to make the sacrifice that they might gain a gentile bride whom they loved.

Matthew Henry draws an interesting parallel with the near kinsman and those in this world who also are happy to take position of the blessings, but are not willing to make the sacrifice:

“This makes many shy of the great redemption: they are not willing to espouse religion. They have heard well of it, and have nothing to say against it; they will give it their good word, but at the same time they will give their good word with it; they are willing to part with it, and cannot be bound to it, for fear of marring their own inheritance in this world. Heaven they could be glad of, but holiness they can dispense with; it will not agree with the lusts they have already espoused, and therefore, let who will purchase heaven at that rate, they cannot.” – Matthew Henry

Ruth 4:7

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

“If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother. Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed”. (Deut 25:5-10)

Ruth 4:8

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

According to the law, if the near kinsman is unwilling to fulfil the role of a kinsman, as the verse above explains, he is to remove his shoe, which he now does; thus making way for Boaz to take Ruth as his bride. Just as the putting on of shoes denotes preparation for a journey, so the taking off of the shoes symbolically speaks of not being prepared to take the journey. The near

kinsman is not prepared to take this journey, so removes his shoe.

As believers, we are to have our shoes on in readiness for the journey that lay before us:

*“And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse: **But be shod with sandals...**”* (Mark 6:8-9).

“Stand therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate of righteousness; And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace” (Eph 6:14-15).

“How beautiful are thy feet with shoes, O prince's daughter!” (Song 7:1).

See also Isaiah 5:7 / Ezekiel 24:17

It is also interesting to note that John the Baptist publicly declared that he was not worthy to ‘bear’ the shoes of Christ, which has the subtle suggestion of his not being worthy of the journey Christ was to make.

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire” = (Matt 3:11)

The only time in scripture that the putting off of shoes is seen as a good thing is when we enter into the presence of the LORD, for then we are to rest from the service (the mission, the work, the journey) of the King in order to worship the King himself (Exodus 3:5 / Acts 7:33). The King is greater than the errands He sends His servants on.

Ruth 4:9

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.

With all the elders bearing witness to this event, Boaz is now free as kinsman to become the redeemer of the land and most importantly, Ruth. Boaz continues....

Ruth 4:10

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.

The nearer kinsman was interested in the land, but not in taking a bride. Boaz, in contrast was not interested in the land, he wanted the bride. Jesus created this world not because He needed anything that He created, but because He wanted to take a Bride out of it.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like unto treasure hid in a field; the which when a man hath found, he hideth, and for joy thereof goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.”

(Matt 13:44) Jesus bought the field in order to get the Bride. Satan evidently doesn't get this. He tried to tempt Jesus by offering Him the world, but Jesus didn't come to gain the world. Jesus said: *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matt 16:26). How short sighted are our attempts to gain the things of this world at the expense of heavenly treasure. See Matthew 6:19-21

“What Jesus is saying is that one human soul is more valuable than the entire cosmos and created universe” – Joe Focht

Ruth 4:11

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:

Evidently this met with great approval among the elders and people of the city. We know that everyone was impressed with Ruth, this virtuous, kind and hardworking Moabitess; and Boaz was a man of great standing in the community – this was going to be some wedding! The words spoken by the people were not just kind, they were prophetic.

Ephratah means ‘the fruitful place’ – What a contrast to Moab where everything died!

If we follow God and allow Him to direct our paths (Proverbs 3:4-5) like Ruth, our marriage will be in ‘the fruitful place’; rather than living in a place where God is not, and seeing it die. A marriage without Christ at the centre may survive, but it will be poorer for it.

Ruth 4:12

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.

This is a strange statement on the surface; Pharez was the illegitimate offspring of Judah and Tamar (see Genesis 38). According to the Law, an

illegitimate son could not be considered part of the congregation of Israel until the 10th generation. “*A bastard shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to his tenth generation shall he not enter into the congregation of the LORD.*” (Deut 23:2) As we will see in verses 18-22 the 10th generation from Pharez was none other than king David!

Interesting asides:

Matthew 1: 1-16 gives us the royal line (via Jer 22:30 – Jeconiah) to Joseph

Luke 3:23-38 gives us the blood line (via David’s son Nathan) to Mary

Saul was from Benjamin, yet God had already said that the royal line of the Messiah would be of the tribe of Judah, so Saul was never God’s first choice for king; it was only at the people’s murmuring as recorded in 1 Samuel 8 that Saul became king. God had already foreordained David to be king as prophecies such as this one in the book of Ruth show.

Ruth 4:13

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

She was barren for around 10+ years in Moab; now she is in ‘the fruitful place’ and she conceives.

Ruth 4:14

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

When Naomi returned from Moab she told everyone to call her ‘Mara’ meaning bitter (Ruth 1:20). If only she could have seen then what she knew now. We all must learn to walk by faith and not by sight. (2 Cor 5:7).

We too can echo the praise of the people, for even though Adam died as a result of sin, God has not left us without a Kinsman - He is the One who one day soon will not only be famous in Israel, but the whole earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. (Habakkuk 2:14)

Ruth 4:15

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

The fruit of the relationship of Boaz and Ruth was to be a restorer of life and a nourisher of old age. The fruit of a life united with our Kinsman-Redeemer will be a restoration of life and nourishing of old age. This life will be more complete (7x) than the best that the old life could ever offer.

Ruth 4:16-17

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

17 And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

Obed – Worship / The serving one / worshipping one

After being redeemed, Ruth – the gentile bride, brought forth ‘worship’.

Ruth 4:18-22

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.

David was the 10th generation from Pharez – legally entitled to sit on the throne and serve before the Lord on behalf of the congregation!

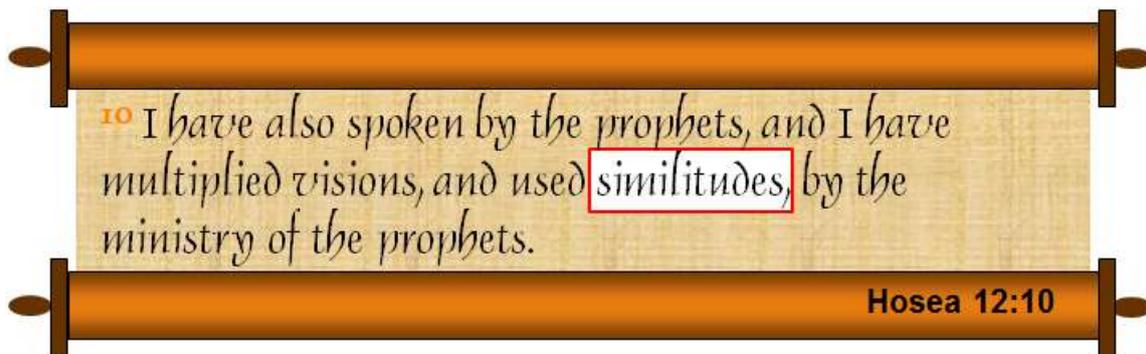
God’s design is breath-taking and so complete. This little book of Ruth covers and anticipates:

- man’s fellowship with God in the garden,
- the fall,
- hope in a resurrection,
- a redeemer who gives up his rights to purchase a gentle Bride,
- a wedding feast, the bringing forth of worship,
- the restoration to blessing of Naomi (viz. Israel)
- and the promised king on the throne of Israel

Praise to Him who knows the end from the beginning, our Redeemer who has written our names in His Book of Life from before the foundation of the world!



Models in the Book of Ruth



The word ‘similitudes’ means a ‘type’ or a ‘model’. A model is simply a representation of something for our insight and instruction. Because God is outside of time, He has chosen to record in his Word real events or situations that act as models, a dress rehearsal if you will, looking forward to the ‘main event’ or fulfilment of that event. One clear example is the Passover in Egypt; whilst being a real event, it foreshadows the taking of the Messiah on the 10th day, as a Lamb without blemish, and then on the 14th day, that Lamb was offered as a sacrifice to atone for sin. All in Egypt whose dwellings were marked by the blood of the lamb were spared from God’s wrath, and so too, all who are in Christ, saved by His shed blood, are spared from God’s wrath.

Before we begin to look at the models (similitudes) in the book of Ruth, another example is found in the account of Abraham and Isaac as recorded in Genesis 22-24.

Abraham was told by God to *“Take now your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go into the land of Moriah; and offer him there for a burnt offering upon one of the mountains which I will tell you of.”* As we consider this, we start to see that, whilst being a real event that occurred in the life of Abraham, it was also a ‘model’ or ‘type’ of God the Father who, 2000 years later, gave up His only son for mankind. This model becomes even more remarkable when we realise that the place that Abraham was told to offer up Isaac (on top of Mount Moriah), was later to be known as Golgotha, the very spot where Jesus was to be crucified. Abraham renamed the place: *“Jehovah-jireh”* which means, *“In the mount of the LORD it shall be seen”* (Gen 22:14). Thus it would seem that on this occasion Abraham actually realised that he was acting out prophecy, anticipating what was to come.

This is confirmed in Hebrews 11:17-19: *“By faith Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac: and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son; of whom it was said, That in Isaac shall thy seed be called: Accounting that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.”*

From the account in Genesis 22, we know that an innocent ram was eventually sacrificed in the place of Isaac, and again in this we see a model in anticipation of Jesus who, like that innocent ram, was sacrificed in our place so that like Isaac, we too could go free.

Such models or ‘anticipatory types’ (i.e. something that anticipates an event or situation that is yet to occur) can be found throughout the Old Testament in particular, and is one of the undeniable evidences that the Bible is supernatural in origin. No way could (or would) Jewish scribes have contrived to conceal the gospel message in their beloved T’nach (the Hebrew name for the Old Testament) – this has to be the work of a supernatural Author who is outside of our space-time, a God who knows the end from the beginning (Isaiah 46:10)

However, not only do the events and circumstances foreshadow something that was yet to come, but the very names the characters had also tell a story. An example of this is found in the genealogy in Genesis chapter 5. When you read the passage you just see a list of names; the problem is that we read the names as they have been translated into English – not as they were originally. Some of the names we do know, such as Adam which means ‘Man’; Seth we are told means ‘Appointed’ (Gen 4:25), and Noah means ‘Comfort’ (Gen 5:29). Lamech we discover comes from the same root as our word ‘lament’ and

means ‘despairing’, and Methuselah comes from two Hebrew roots meaning ‘death’ and ‘shall bring’; literally Methuselah’s name means ‘his death shall bring’. This is amazing in itself, for the very year that Methuselah died, the flood came!

If we list the names in Genesis 5 we have:

Adam Seth Enosh Cainan Mahalalel
Jared Enoch Methuselah Lamech Noah

However, if we now note the meaning of their names we get the following:

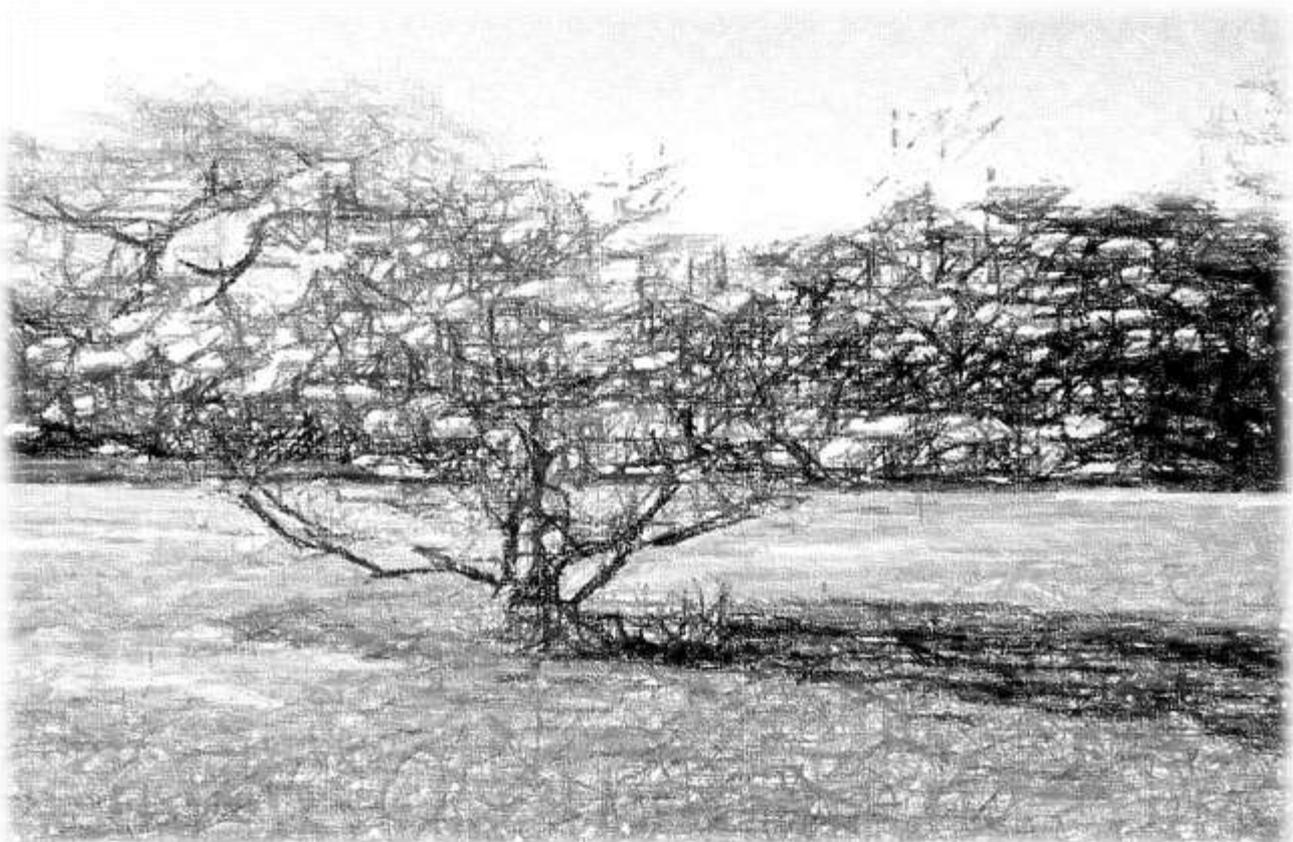
Adam	=	Man
Seth	=	Appointed
Enosh	=	Mortal Sorrow
Cainan	=	The Blessed God
Mahalalel	=	Come Down
Enoch	=	Teaching
Methuselah	=	His Death Shall Bring
Lamech	=	Despairing
Noah	=	Comfort

Putting this together, the names read:

Man Appointed Mortal Sorrow (but) The Blessed God (shall) Come Down Teaching (that) His Death Shall Bring (the) Despairing Comfort

This is the Christian gospel hidden in the names of a genealogy that pre-dates Christianity by over

2500 years! Again, there is no way a Jew would have wanted to have done this even if it were humanly possible – which it isn’t – and yet it is there for all to see! The Bible is a supernatural message from an infinite Creator God to His creation.



Model #1 – The Plan of Redemption

As we now turn to look at the models in the book of Ruth, we find that our first model is based in the names of the main characters. As we saw in our study, the book starts by telling us the story of the family of a man named Elimelech, and Elimelech means ‘God is my King’. As Pastor Ray Steadman explains: “In that one name the whole doctrine of man may be comprehended. This book begins with God, just as the Bible begins with God -- “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” (Gen. 1:1) The Bible never argues the existence of God. The God of the Bible is the God who is, the God who exists. From beginning to end you will never find any apologetic dissertations on whether or not God exists. The Bible starts with the fact of God. The existence of God is a matter that rests wholly upon the innate revelation given to the human heart.

Man either admits that God exists or he denies that God exists -- one or the other. He is built to recognize the existence of God. There is no hope for him if he doesn't, because as Hebrews 11 tells us, "For whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists." (Heb. 11:6) God is. And it isn't difficult to believe that God is. Light from God is streaming to us from all around. It is more difficult to believe that God isn't. Only those who are educated beyond their intelligence finally talk themselves into believing that there is no God. The whole story of man begins with that great fact that God is.” – GOD IS my king

In the beginning the man that God had created had a personal relationship with the god who made him (God is MY king), and that is what God intended for all of Adam's descendants. This will one day be achieved for all who accept the gift of salvation thorough Christ: “*And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*” (Rev 21:3)

As a result of this personal relationship (God is MY king), man had dominion over all that God had made (Psalm 8:6). However this was only the case so long as God is my KING .

Man was given dominion over all the universe that God had made, but only as he himself was subject to the dominion of the God who made him. (Ray Steadman). Consider a top executive of a multi-million pound organisation; he has thousands of staff under his control, whatever he says is done. But what influence does he have on Saturday when he's not at work and goes to by his groceries from the local store? None whatsoever! He has to join the queue to pay like everyone else.

Why? Because his ‘dominion’ only has effect when he is operating under the authority of his company. So it was with Adam. When he came out from under the authority of God, God ceased being his King and Adam forfeited his right to dominion over the earth. As a result the ‘title’ of the earth passed to Satan (See 2 Cor 4:4 / Luke 4: 5-6).

Now in our account, Elimelech married ‘pleasure’ (Naomi) and the result was ‘sickness’ (Mahlon) and ‘pining’ (Chilion) all of which ultimately died and ‘pleasure’ turned to ‘bitterness’ (Mara). So it was when Adam ‘married’ pleasure in the Garden of Eden.

“And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. (Gen 3:4)

However, just as in the book of Ruth, this pleasure brought forth death.

Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death. (James 1:15).

For many this is the end of the story, for they choose, like Orpah (meaning: dear / fawn / double minded) to serve their own god's, trying to find a way by their own efforts to climb the mountain to eternal security, just like an unstable and fearful fawn climbing the mountain slopes to escape from its predators.

However we read in 1 Corinthians 1:18 that there are two groups: those who perish (like Oprah) and those who are saved – enter Ruth!

Ruth means ‘beauty’ or ‘desirable’, not that she is necessarily beautiful in and of herself, but as the adage goes, ‘beauty is in the eye of the beholder’. She was desirable to her Boaz, and the same is true of us. As David asks: *What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him? (Psalm 8:4)*, and as Paul states: “*For when we were yet without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly. For scarcely for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. (Romans 5:6-8).*

And why did God do this for us? Because it pleased Him.

Ruth, having made the decision to seek the God of Israel, ‘happens’ upon the field of Boaz (whose name means ‘Strength’) only to find out that he already knows all about her. We think that we

have engineered the circumstances only to find out that Jesus was in control all along: *“You did not choose Me....”* (John 15: 16)

Our Strength then overcame the law, of which the near kinsman is a type. The law offered a way of redemption but was not able to perform; in Romans 8:3 we read *“For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son....”*

“Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree” (Gal 3:13)

Boaz purchased Ruth openly in front of witnesses – Christ purchased His bride openly dying a public death to purchase us with His own blood.

Christ is our Strength: *“I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me.”* (Phil 4:13)

Peter says: *“But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle you”* (1 Peter 5:10)

Finally, ‘Beauty’ is joined to ‘Strength’ and she brings forth worship (Obed)!

So here we have the gospel hidden in the names of the characters of the book of Ruth.

“When Elimelech married Naomi, they brought forth Mahlon and Chilion and were forced to leave Bethlehem-Judah. Elimelech died and Naomi became Mara. Later, both Ruth and Orpah (gentiles) had the chance to return to the God of Israel. Orpah turned back and sought false gods. Ruth returned to the God of Israel. However Ruth found grace in the eyes of her kinsman redeemer who then purchased her and she was joined to Boaz. (What the near kinsman could not do Boaz did). Ruth married her Boaz and brought forth Obed”.

<u>Names</u>	<u>Meaning</u>
Elimelech	= God is my king
Naomi	= Pleasure
Bethlehem-Judah	= The house of bread and praise
Mara	= Bitterness
Mahlon	= Sickness
Chilion	= Pining
Ruth	= Beauty

Orpah	=	Double minded
Boaz	=	Strength
Near kinsman	=	The Law
Obed	=	Worship

As an exercise, rewrite the above summary of the book of Ruth (i.e fill in the blanks below) using the meaning of the names to give a summary of plan of God as revealed in scripture – then sit back and be amazed at the God who alone knows the end from the beginning.

When _____ married _____, they brought forth _____ and _____ and were forced to leave _____.

_____ died and _____ became _____.

Both _____ and _____ (gentiles) had the chance to return to the God of Israel. _____ turned back and sought false gods.

However _____ returned to the God of Israel. _____ found grace in the eyes of her kinsman redeemer who then purchased her and she was joined to _____.

(What the _____ could not do _____ did).

_____ married her _____ and brought forth _____.

Model #2 – Naomi & the History of Israel

As we mentioned during our study, Naomi is also a type of the nation of Israel; and her life as recorded in the book of Ruth prophetically lays out the history of Israel from beginning to end – this serves as yet another rebuttal to the unbiblical and heretical teaching that God has finished with the nation of Israel and that the promises given to Israel are now supposed to be fulfilled by the Church – This idea is known as ‘replacement theology’ - which is an apt title because it replaces God’s word with man’s ideas!

Naomi doubted God’s provision and went in search of other gods and sought salvation from the hills of Moab; of Israel God says: *“Surely as a wife treacherously departeth from her husband, so have ye dealt treacherously with me, O house of Israel, saith the LORD. A voice was heard upon the high places, weeping and supplications of the children of Israel: for they have perverted their way, and they have forgotten the LORD their God. Return, ye backsliding children, and I will heal your backslidings. Behold, we come unto thee; for thou art the LORD our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the hills, and from the multitude of mountains: truly in the LORD our God is the salvation of Israel. (Jer 3:20-23)*

Amongst the Gentiles Naomi suffered great loss; the same has been true of Israel – a fact prophesied in incredible detail in the book of Deuteronomy: *“But it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the LORD thy God, to observe to do all his commandments and his statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee: Cursed shalt thou be in the city, and cursed shalt thou be in the field. Cursed shall be thy basket and thy store. Cursed shall be the **fruit of thy body**, and the **fruit of thy land**, the increase of thy kine, and the flocks of thy sheep. Cursed shalt thou be when thou comest in, and cursed shalt thou be when thou goest out. The LORD shall send upon thee cursing, vexation, and rebuke, in all that thou settest thine hand unto for to do, until thou be destroyed, and until thou perish quickly; because of the wickedness of thy doings, whereby thou hast forsaken me. The LORD shall make the pestilence cleave unto thee, until he have consumed thee from off the land, whither thou goest to possess it. The LORD shall smite thee with a consumption, and with a fever, and with an inflammation, and with*

*an extreme burning, and with the sword, and with blasting, and with mildew; and they shall pursue thee until thou perish. **And thy heaven that is over thy head shall be brass, and the earth that is under thee shall be iron.** The LORD shall make the rain of thy land powder and dust: from heaven shall it come down upon thee, until thou be destroyed. (Deut 28:15-24)*

*“The LORD shall cause thee to be smitten before thine enemies: thou shalt go out one way against them, and flee seven ways before them: **and shalt be removed into all the kingdoms of the earth.....**The LORD shall bring thee, and thy king which thou shalt set over thee, unto a nation which neither thou nor thy fathers have known; and there shalt thou serve other gods, wood and stone. And thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the LORD shall lead thee.....**And ye shall be left few in number**, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven for multitude; because thou wouldest not obey the voice of the LORD thy God.....**And the LORD shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even unto the other;** and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even wood and stone.....**And among these nations shalt thou find no ease**, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: but the LORD shall give thee there a trembling heart, and failing of eyes, and sorrow of mind.....**And thy life shall hang in doubt before thee;** and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt have none assurance of thy life.....*In the morning thou shalt say, Would God it were even! and at even thou shalt say, Would God it were morning! for the fear of thine heart wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the sight of thine eyes which thou shalt see. (Deut 28:25, 36-37, 62, 64-67)**

Remarkably, all this has happened to Israel, their life has hung in doubt in the nations where they have been driven.

Nevertheless, God made unconditional promises to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the land from the river of Egypt (in the Sinai Peninsula) to the Euphrates river (in modern day Iraq). To date this land has not belonged to Israel in its entirety. So either Israel are yet to inherit it, or God promises have been broken – which has serious implications for all of us! Furthermore repeatedly God has promised in His Word to bring Israel back to their land – something that for almost 2000 years seemed impossible, and yet on

May 14th 1948 the nation was born in a day as prophesied by Isaiah:

“Who hath heard such a thing? who hath seen such things? Shall the earth be made to bring forth in one day? or shall a nation be born at once? for as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.” (Isaiah 66:8)

However Ezekiel saw a strange vision of this, recorded in chapter 37. Ezekiel sees a valley full of dry bones, which he is told represent the whole house of Israel. God asks him “can these bones live?” Ezekiel responds: “O Lord God, You know”. Then Ezekiel sees the sinews and flesh coming upon the bones and skin covering the bones. However he notices that there is no breath in them. This is a picture of Israel being brought back to life as a nation again, but without the Spirit in them. We read: *“Therefore prophesy and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel.”* (Ezek 37:12). Israel have been gathered back into their land, but in unbelief. Just as with Naomi who returned in bitterness, blaming God for her misfortune. The majority of Jews today claim to be atheists – but God *will pour upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the spirit of grace and of supplications: and they shall look upon me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for him, as one that is in bitterness for his firstborn.* (Zechariah 12:10). God will open Israel’s eyes and like Naomi, they will finally see their Kinsman-Redeemer and enter into a time of blessing!

Naomi as a type of Israel - Summary:

- ❑ Abandoned the God of Israel
Jeremiah 3:20-23
- ❑ Driven to the Gentiles & suffer great loss
Deuteronomy 28
- ❑ Re-gathered in unbelief
Ezekiel 37
- ❑ Re-introduced to their Kinsman-Redeemer
Hosea 6:1-3 / Zech 12:10
- ❑ Land and blessings restored
Amos 9:11-15

Model #3 – The Church

Many of the ways in which Ruth is a model of the Church have been mentioned in our main study, so here is a summary with some scriptures to look up:

- Gentile married to ‘sickness’
Ephesians 2:1
- Converted to the God of Israel through Jewish witness
Romans 3:2
- ‘Happen’ on the field of the Kinsman
John 15:16
- Introduced to the Kinsman by and unnamed servant
John 16:13
- The Kinsman leaves ‘handfuls of purpose’
Romans 8:28
- She recognises her poverty before Him
Romans 3:23-24
- Why have I found Grace in Your sight?
Ephesians 2:8
- She is to wash and cleanse herself before meeting her Kinsman
Ephesians 5:25-26
- She finds Him at the threshing floor
Ps 119:67/Luk 21:36
- She seeks to be under His authority
1 Cor 6:20
- She simply rests, knowing that He will complete everything
Phil 1:6/Col 1:13-14

Model #4 – The Kinsman-Redeemer

As Ruth had her kinsman-redeemer in Boaz, so we have ours in Christ. As above, a summary to stimulate your own study: - remember that all of the following are drawn from the book of Ruth regarding Boaz. It just so ‘happens’ that they all apply to Christ – this is not a coincidence it is evidence of supernatural design!

- He knew all about her
Revelation 17:8
- He gave up His reputation
Philippians 2:7-8
- He overcomes the ‘obstacle’
Galatians 3:13
- He gave Himself for His bride
Ephesians 5:25-27
- He buys the field to get the bride
Matthew 13:44
- He purchases the bride publicly
Luke 23:35
- He provides out of His abundance
Philippians 4:19

3 Conditions for the Kinsman

- He had to be willing
John 3:16
- He had to be able
Revelation 5
- He could do nothing until she asked
Rev 3:21/Rom 10:9

Model #5 – True and False Followers

Ruth is a type of all who received the truth of God, and were willing to surrender the things of this world that they might gain Christ.

“But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. (Matt 13:23)

Paul said: *“But what things were gain to me, those I counted loss for Christ. Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord: for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung, that I may win Christ” (Phil 3:7-8)*

Orpah is a type of those who hear but then reject God in favour of the world they know, and consider the cost of leaving too great. Jesus said:

“For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” (Mark 8:36)

“But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it; Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.” (Matt 13:21-22)

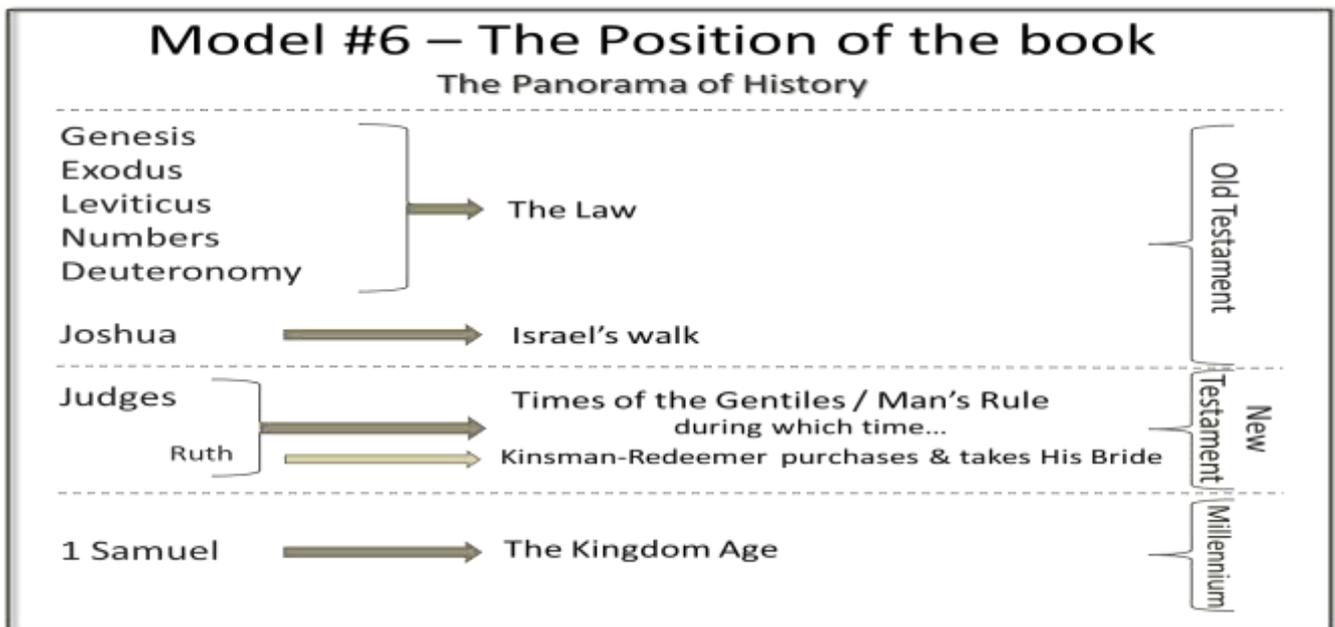
“Then said Jesus unto his disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it. For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt 16:24-26)

Model #6 – The Position of the Book

This is not a model in the strict sense, but it is nevertheless an interesting observation based on the position of the book in the Bible. We know from the Bible that after God’s specific dealings with the nation of Israel as recorded in the Old Testament, we are now in a time when every man is doing what seems right in his own eyes ([Judges 21:25](#)). During this period of time the book of Ruth has been acted out on the ‘big stage’. The Kinsman-Redeemer has purchased His bride and will shortly come to receive her unto Himself ([John 14:3](#) / [1 Thes 4:16](#) / [Eph 5:27](#)). After this we will enter into the kingdom age when the Kinsman-Redeemer Himself will return to reign on the throne of David, not only over Israel, but over the whole world.

Another such example can be seen in the fact that Noah took clean and unclean animals onto the Ark – how did he know which was which? The written law designating what was clean and unclean was again not given until the time of Moses; however knowledge of what was clean and unclean predated the written law by 2500 years. The same is true of the shedding of the blood of an animal to atone for sin; it was written down as part of the Mosaic law, but it existed from the time that God made the first sin offering in [Genesis 3:21](#) (you could argue that it even pre-dated the foundation of the world [Rev 13:8!](#)).

In our study we have seen the importance of this law in regard to Boaz and the land; however in order to see how this applies to the Jesus and the earth we need to do some homework!



Model #7 – The Redemption of The Land

“The land shall not be sold for ever: for the land is mine; for ye are strangers and sojourners with me. And in all the land of your possession ye shall grant a redemption for the land. If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.” (Leviticus 25:23-28)

The above law was not given until the time of Moses, however it demonstrates a principle that goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.....” that much we know; but what is often overlooked is that God finished his work of Creation and saw that it was ‘very good’ ([Gen 1:31](#)). We also know from the book of Job that when God laid the foundations of the earth all the sons of God shouted for joy. Now, if all means all (as we could reasonably assume), then it must mean that all the angels (who are the sons of God in this context) shouted for joy.

It must also follow that Satan, who is an angel, had not rebelled at this point in time, for if he had, then God’s finished work could not be declared to be ‘very good’ if indeed the embodiment of evil was roaming loose in the earth, nor could it be said that all the sons of God shouted for joy if in fact Satan

and his third did not. The fact that Satan did not fall until sometime after the seven days of creation is put beyond all doubt by [Ezekiel 28:13-15](#) which clearly states that *“You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone was your covering.....You were perfect in your ways from the day you were created, till iniquity was found in you.”* So if Satan was created perfect and was in Eden, and he sung with the other angels when the foundations of the earth was laid, what made him rebel? Why the change of heart? Quite simply, Pride (see [1 Tim 3:6](#)). On day six God created man ‘in His own image’, and gave him dominion over all creation ([Psalm 8:6](#)). This did not go down too well with Satan (Lucifer at that time) who was the ‘anointed cherub’– the ‘top dog’. Isaiah records that Satan said in his heart *“I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God.....I will be like the Most High”* ([Isaiah 14:13-14](#)). (Notice that Satan doesn’t say he wants to be God, but like God)

How could Satan become ‘like’ the Most High? Only man had been made ‘like’, in the image of, the Most High and given dominion over all creation ([Gen 1:28](#)). No amount of wishful thinking on Satan’s part would change the situation. However, if Satan could cause man to forfeit his position, he could steal man’s office, gaining dominion and he would thus be able to exalt his throne above the stars (angels) of God, and in so doing, gain the title of the earth.

So we find in [Genesis 3](#) that Satan, who had been in the Garden with Adam & Eve (and was almost certainly know to them), takes Eve aside - and why else would she listen to him or trust him unless he was ‘perfect in beauty’, the ‘anointed cherub’? – after all, it is stretching the imagination just a little too far to believe that Eve would have listened to a strange snake and thought ‘oh that sound’s like a good idea’! – and we are clearly told in [1 Tim 2:14](#) that Eve was deceived and in [Genesis 3:1](#) that ‘the Serpent (Hebrew: ‘Nachash’ – ‘The Shining One’) was more cunning...’. Deception works by gaining your confidence and then twisting the truth. Thus the end result was that mankind fell and Satan usurped mankind’s position gaining the title to the earth. As a result mankind was made ‘for a little while lower than the angels’ ([Psalm 8:5](#) / [Heb 2:7-9](#)), losing his estate and standing before God – a condition that would have persisted but for the blood of the Lamb that redeemed fallen humanity.

It is at this point that the law of redemption comes into its own. If you remember, the law made provision of someone who had become poor and ‘sold’ away their land. This is certainly the condition for Adam, and all of his descendants. The land had been lost and they had nothing with which to buy it back again (just like Naomi and Ruth). However if a kinsman of Adam could be found who was willing and able, the land could be redeemed – the only condition being that whoever bought it would also have to marry the bride!

All of this is ‘acted out’ in dramatic fashion in the book of Revelation, chapter 5. There we are introduced to a seven-sealed scroll written on both sides. This, as we have already mentioned, is the title deed to the earth. However we read: *“And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof? And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon. And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. (Rev 5:2-4)*

The two things that are immediately apparent are that they are searching for a man, in heaven, in earth or under the earth – they look everywhere for a man – it has to be a man.

Secondly, they cannot find a man who is worthy to open the scroll so John ‘sobs convulsively’. Why?

Because only a kinsman of Adam is legally entitled to open the title deed; but if one who is worthy cannot be found then the title and ownership would pass to the current tenant – in this case Satan! No wonder John wept much. This is one of the most dramatic events in all scripture. Have you ever watch a film and been getting ready for the happy ending? Then all of a sudden there’s a twist that could ruin everything? That’s what is happening here. But the good news (and this really is good news – possibly some of the best ever!), the good news is:

“behold, the Lion of the tribe of Judah, the Root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof” ([Rev 5:5](#)). Yes folks, the Lion of the tribe of Judah is both a kinsman of Adam and He is able (and how!) to redeem the land! (and by the way He gets the girl too!)

The rest of the book of Revelation is really just the account of Jesus claiming back the earth (which we see accomplished in chapter 11:15 *“And the*

seventh angel sounded; and there were great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of his Christ; and he shall reign for ever and ever.”), and then God disposing the usurpers before Jesus comes and sets up His kingdom on earth, reigning and having dominion over all creation, as the Second Adam (1 Cor 15:45) thus doing what the first Adam failed to do.



Appendix A – The Tenth Man

The Bible is full of evidence of God’s design. The following observations by Chuck Missler show that the tenth generation was a key figure in the line of the Messiah. If any of these men had not been obedient to God, God’s plan would have to have been radically altered – fortunately God knows the end from the beginning and knew that these men would be obedient, hence choosing them represented no risk to His divine plan of salvation.

Questions sometimes arise about ‘predestination’ and ‘free will’. If God has planned it all, how can we have free will? On the other hand, if we have free will, how can God be in complete control?

This is a concept that can only begin being grasped by realising that God is outside of time. God knows everything about you, the way you will go in any given situation – nothing is a surprise to a God who knows everything! Whilst we may be repeatedly surprised by our own actions and decisions, God is not. This is a huge relief to us because it means that God already knew the mistakes that you were going to make today before you made them – and yet (if you are a Christian) He still chose to save you. What God has started in

your life He is able to complete because it is not based on your ability, but on His!

“Wherefore he is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them.”
(Hebrews 7:25)

“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6)

The Tenth Man		
Adam	Shem	Isaac
Seth	Arphaxad	Jacob
Enosh	Salah	Judah
Kenan	Eber	Pharez
Mahalalel	Peleg	Hezron
Jared	Reu	Ram
Enoch	Serug	Amminadab
Methuselah	Nahor	Nahshon
Lamech	Terah	Salman
Noah	Abraham	Boaz

Appendix B – A Hidden Prophecy in Genesis 38

In recent years there has been much speculation about ‘Bible Codes’ and ‘Hidden Messages’ that are supposedly in the Bible. Some have gone as far as trying to use these codes to predict the future. This has led many to dismiss the idea wholesale; some have suggested that because of the nature of the Hebrew language, you can make it say anything you want. There is an element of truth in this, yet at the same time the danger is of course of ‘throwing the baby out with the bath water’, because without doubt, God has placed hidden messages in the text of the Bible for the diligent to discover – for what purpose? Certainly not for us to tell the future by them, but rather to give the glory for this intricate design to God who has engineered a masterpiece beyond comprehension.

Proverbs 25:2 says: “It is the glory of God to conceal a matter, and the honour of kings to search them out”

Ancient scribes believed that in the text of the Torah (the first five books of Moses) God had concealed the blueprint for the universe! An ancient rabbinical proverb stated that when the Messiah came, He would not only interpret the words and the letters, but also the spaces between the letters! Jesus Himself said that not one yod (the smallest Hebrew letter) or tittle (a tiny decorative hook put on a Hebrew letter – much like the dot that we put above an ‘i’) would pass from the law until all be fulfilled. Clearly our attention is drawn to the little details!

We have already seen that God has put hidden models into the surface text of the Bible, what is amazing to discover is that God has also put hidden messages into the very letters! It is possible that the Bible itself is the Lamb’s book of Life described in Revelation. If that is so, then God has placed the names of all who are saved in the Bible. This may be hard to grasp, but we know that God knew who would be saved before the foundation of the world. If our names are hidden in the Bible, it may not be the names that we are called by now, for these names were given to us by our earthly parents; rather in Revelation 3:12 we discover that God has a new name for us. Or maybe God has identified us by our DNA, which is unique for each person?

If our names are in the Bible in code form, how important not to mess with scripture, adding or taking away as suites you, for your name could be in that passage of scripture that you choose to dismiss! Consider what John was told: “For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, *”If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.”* (Rev 22:18-19)

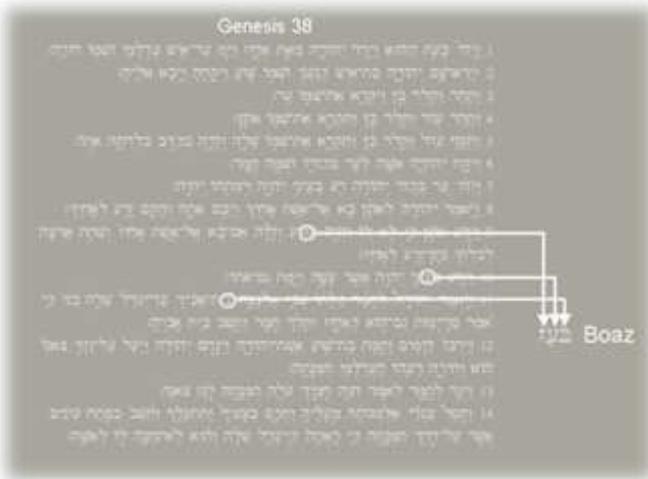
In our study we looked at the strange prophecy that was given when Boaz and Ruth were married: *“And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.”* (Ruth 4:12). On the surface this seems more like an insult than a word of blessing! As we noted, the story of how Tamar came to be pregnant by her father-in-law Judah is recorded in Genesis 38. We also noted that an illegitimate son could not be part of the congregation of Israel until the 10th generation, which, as is shown at the end of chapter 4, was none other than king David!

On its own this is a remarkable prophecy that clearly identifies David as God’s appointed; however, hidden in the text of Genesis 38 – the very chapter that deals with Judah, Tamar and Pharez – we discover another breathtaking evidence of supernatural design.

If we look at the Hebrew text of Genesis 38 we simply see what we would expect, lots of Hebrew letters (going from right to left).

However, hidden at 49 letter intervals we find the 3 Hebrew letters that spell.....

.....**Boaz**



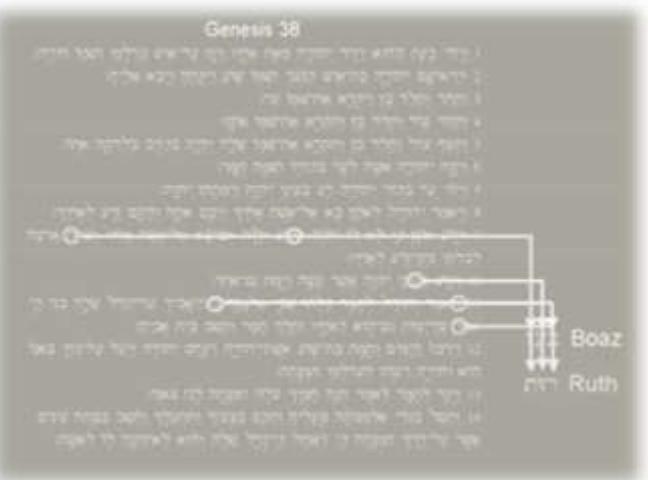
Boaz!

at 49 letter intervals

On its own it is interesting that Boaz's name is found in this passage, but it could statistically be the result of random chance.

However.....

.....we then discover that the same is true for Ruth!



Ruth!

at 49 letter intervals

....and again for Obed!



Obed!

at 49 letter intervals

....and then again for Jesse!



Jesse!

at 49 letter intervals

And finally for David!

Appendix C – What is the danger of "Amillennialism"?

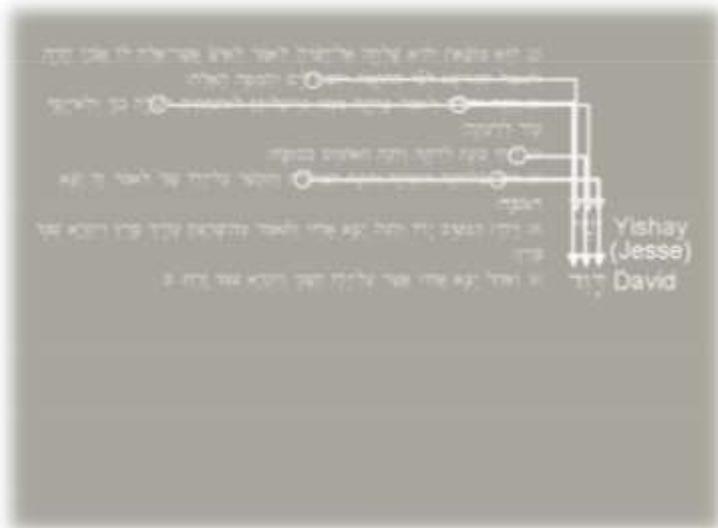
Amillennialism is a view that emerged around the third century A.D. which adopts an allegorical approach to eschatology (the study of ‘last things’ or the ‘end times’ as it is often referred to). In other words, it interprets scripture, and particularly the book of Revelation in a non-literal way. Because of this, the theory specifically denies a future literal ‘Millennium’ where Christ will return to rule for 1000 years on Earth on the throne of David.

In the third century, the position held by the early church (namely, that Christ would return and usurp the wicked and corrupt governments of this world), was not obviously a ‘politically correct’ notion. Indeed, it was felt by some that the last thing the church needed was to be seen to be ‘preaching’ against the Roman Empire – an Empire who had already made persecution of Christians a national sport.

Hence, rather than interpret the many scriptures regarding Christ’s imminent return and the establishment of His kingdom literally, men such as Origen, and later Constantine, ‘spiritualized’ much of scripture, saying that books such as Revelation were to be taken symbolically, depicting the struggle between good and evil, and so apparently not detailing actual events that are yet to take place in God’s appointed time.

This view therefore held that Christ’s kingdom and reign on earth were to be fulfilled symbolically through the Church. Some even went as far as to suggest that Christ would not actually return bodily, but that the Church would conquer the world and Christ would reign in the hearts of His subjects. Furthermore, the promises and prophecies regarding national Israel would also have to find a ‘spiritual’ fulfilment in the church, as there is no room in Amillennialism for a national Israel (contrary to God’s unconditional covenant with Abraham and Paul’s clear statements in Romans 9-11).

This paved the way for the dominance of the Roman Catholic Church, who saw their mandate as establishing Christ’s government on earth, often at the expense of the Jews, who were labelled ‘Christ killers’ and held forever accountable for the crucifixion of Jesus. Because of the Roman Catholic Church’s widespread influence,



David!

at 49 letter intervals

So not only do we have the names of Boaz / Ruth / Obed / Jesse / David all at 49 letter intervals, they are also in the correct chronological order! And all in the one passage of the Bible that the book of Ruth points us to regarding the genealogy of king David!

Chuck Missler comments: "The probability of all five names to show up at a given interval has been estimated to be about one in 6500; however, for them to show up in chronological order is estimated to be about one in over 800,000!"

"The presence of such features of the Biblical text is a profound demonstration of its supernatural origin. There is absolutely no way that these details could have been anticipated in advance except by Divine guidance and the control of the most subtle aspects of the recorded text – far outstripping any insights of the authors themselves. In addition to the astonishing specifics themselves, the discovery of these features underscores the confidence we may have in the precision of the text, and the overwhelming implications that it is a skilfully crafted integrated message – from Genesis 1 to Revelation 22."

- Chuck Missler – Cosmic Codes (available from www.khouse.org)

Amillennialism became the prevalent view throughout the established church.

Although very little was done to rectify the situation during the reformation, the last 200 years has seen a return to the clear teaching of the Bible and an understanding of 'Pre-Millennialism'. Whilst largely unaddressed by the mainstream pulpits, men such as Tim LeHaye (with the 'Left Behind' series of novels), Hal Lindsey (with 'The Late Great Planet Earth'), and the likes of Chuck Smith (with the Calvary Chapel movement) have done much to highlight this Biblical doctrine to the Church.

However, we are now seeing another twist:

After the 'pre-millennial friendly' last 50 years, characterized by an excitement and anticipation of Christ's imminent return – and also fuelled by Israel's return to the Land in 1948 - many in the church appear to be losing the zeal and excitement once held. With the passing of the year 2000, and no Rapture, the focus has shifted to 'building the church'. Numerous church growth programs have emerged that subtly teach that it's our responsibility to build the church (completely contrary to Acts 2:47) and that it is the job of the church to bring peace to a hurting world. Whilst this sounds idyllic, it is against the clear teaching of scripture, which warns of wars and rumours of wars, pestilence, famine, widespread apostasy and global anti-Semitism – only to be finally resolved when the King of the Jews, the Lord of Glory, returns to 'deliver up the kingdom to God the Father' and 'put down all rule, authority and power' (1 Cor 15:24), establish His own kingdom and reign on the Throne of David (as Gabriel told Mary in Luke 1:32) for 1000 years as John records six times in Revelation 20.

The Bible is being laid aside and prophecy is being abandoned, labelled as 'not our concern' by leading church growth proponents. Without the light and hope of the prophetic scriptures, the growth of the church by any means necessary is now the driving force; if that means removing repentance from the 'gospel message' so as to make it more palatable, so be it. If it means joining with 'our Catholic brothers and sisters', whose church has never deviated from Amillennialism and the desire to establish a global church, so be it. If it means working alongside the New Age or secular organizations to tackle global issues, as long as the church gains political sway and people

feel compelled to support this 'good cause', so be it. If it means the acceptance of 'ChrIslam', and embracing Allah as the same God revealed in the Bible, so be it. The church must rule supreme, and Amillennialism is the cross-road where old and new can meet, lay aside doctrinal differences, and establish the kingdom on earth.

The reality is, this 'global church' will succeed, a kingdom will be established, but it will not be the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ (cf Rev 13:8).

"For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables". (2 Tim 4:3-4).

"For there shall arise false Christs, and false prophets, and shall shew great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if it were possible, they shall deceive the very elect" (Matt 24:24)

"And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years" (Rev 20:4-6) And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS.

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end" (Luke 1:31-33)



Appendix D – An Eight Cow Wife

We concluded our study of the book of Ruth with the following story. It serves to underline the love that Boaz had for Ruth – the love that Christ has for the Church.

Johnny Lingo's Eight-Cow Wife

(based partially on a story from Reader's Digest)

My trip to the Kiniwata Island in the Pacific was a memorable one. Although the island was beautiful and I had an enjoyable time, the thing I remember most about my trip was the fact "Johnny Lingo gave eight cows for his wife." I'm reminded of it every time I see a woman belittle her husband or a wife wither under her husband's scorn. I want to say to them, "You should know *why* Johnny Lingo gave eight cows for his wife."

Johnny Lingo is known throughout the islands for his skills, intelligence, and savvy. If you hire him as a guide, he will show you the best fishing spots and the best places to get pearls. Johnny is also one of the sharpest traders in the islands. He can get you the best possible deals. The people of Kiniwata all speak highly of Johnny Lingo. Yet, when they speak of him, they always smile just a little mockingly.

A couple days after my arrival to Kiniwata, I went to the manager of the guesthouse to see who he thought would be a good fishing guide. "Johnny Lingo," said the manager. "He's the best around. When you go shopping, let him do the bargaining. Johnny knows how to make a deal."

"Johnny Lingo!" hooted a nearby boy. The boy rocked with laughter as he said, "Yea, Johnny can make a deal alright!"

"What's going on?" I demanded.

"Everybody tells me to get in touch with Johnny Lingo and then they start laughing. Please, let me in on the joke."

"Oh, the people like to laugh," the manager said, shrugging. "Johnny's the brightest and strongest young man in the islands. He's also the richest for his age."

"But ..." I protested. "... if he's all you say he is, why does everyone laugh at him behind his back?"

"Well, there is one thing. Five months ago, at fall festival, Johnny came to Kiniwata and found himself a wife. He gave her father eight cows!"

I knew enough about island customs to be

impressed. A dowry of two or three cows would net a fair wife and four or five cows would net a very nice wife.

"Wow!" I said. "Eight cows! She must have beauty that takes your breath away."

"She's not ugly, ..." he conceded with a little smile, "... but calling her 'plain' would definitely be a compliment. Sam Karoo, her father, was afraid he wouldn't be able to marry her off. Instead of being stuck with her, he got eight cows for her. Isn't that extraordinary? This price has never been paid before."

"Yet, you called Johnny's wife 'plain?' "

"I said it would be a compliment to call her plain. She was skinny and she walked with her shoulders hunched and her head ducked. She was scared of her own shadow."

"Well," I said, "I guess there's just no accounting for love."

"True enough." agreed the man. "That's why the villagers grin when they talk about Johnny. They get special satisfaction from the fact the sharpest trader in the islands was bested by dull old Sam Karoo."

"But how?"

"No one knows and everyone wonders. All of the cousins urged Sam to ask for three cows and hold out for two until he was sure Johnny would pay only one. To their surprise Johnny came to Sam Karoo and said, 'Father of Sarita, I offer eight cows for your daughter.' "

"Eight cows." I murmured. "I'd like to meet this Johnny Lingo."

I wanted fish and pearls, so the next afternoon I went to the island of Nurabandi. As I asked directions to Johnny's house, I noticed Johnny's neighbors were also amused at the mention of his name. When I met the slim, serious young man I could see immediately why everyone respected his skills. However, this only reinforced my confusion over him.

As we sat in his house, he asked me, "You come here from Kiniwata?"

"Yes."

"They speak of me on that island?"

"Yes. They say you can provide me anything I need. They say you're intelligent, resourceful, and the sharpest trader in the islands."

He smiled gently. "My wife is from Kiniwata."

"Yes, I know."

"They speak of her?"

"A little."

"What do they say?"

"Why, just . . ." The question caught me off balance. "They told me you were married at festival time."

"Nothing more?" The curve of his eyebrows told me he knew there had to be more.

"They also say the marriage settlement was eight cows." I paused. "They wonder why."

"They ask that?" His eyes lighted with pleasure. "Everyone in Kiniwata knows about the eight cows?"

I nodded.

"And in Nurabandi, everyone knows it too?" His chest expanded with satisfaction. "Always and forever, when they speak of marriage settlements, it will be remembered that Johnny Lingo paid eight cows for Sarita."

So that's the answer, I thought: Vanity.

Just then Sarita entered the room to place flowers on the table. She stood still for a moment to smile at her husband and then left. She was the most beautiful woman I have ever seen. The lift of her shoulders, the tilt of her chin, and the sparkle in her eyes all spelled self-confidence and pride. Not an arrogant and haughty pride, but a confident inner beauty that radiated in her every movement.

I turned back to Johnny and found him looking at me.

"You admire her?" he murmured.

"She . . . she's gorgeous." I said. "Obviously, this is not the one everyone is talking about. She can't be the Sarita you married on Kiniwata."

"There's only one Sarita. Perhaps, she doesn't look the way you expected."

"She doesn't. I heard she was homely. They all make fun of you because you let yourself be

cheated by Sam Karoo."

"You think eight cows was too many?" A smile slid over his lips.

"No, but how can she be so different from the way they described her?"

Johnny said, "Think about how it must make a girl feel to know her husband paid a very low dowry for her? It must be insulting to her to know he places such little value on her. Think about how she must feel when the other women boast about the high prices their husbands paid for them. It must be embarrassing for her. I would not let this happen to my Sarita."

"So, you paid eight cows just to make your wife happy?"

"Well, of course I wanted Sarita to be happy, but there's more to it than that. You say she is different from what you expected. This is true. Many things can change a woman. There are things that happen on the inside and things that happen on the outside. However, the thing that matters most is how she views herself. In Kiniwata, Sarita believed she was worth nothing. As a result, that's the value she projected. Now, she knows she is worth more than any other woman in the islands. It shows, doesn't it?"

"Then you wanted . . ."

"I wanted to marry Sarita. She is the only woman I love."

"But . . ." I was close to understanding.

"But," he finished softly, "I wanted an eight-cow wife."

The above story was based partially on an article found in *Reader's Digest* (February, 1988). The original work was copyrighted by Patricia McGerr in 1965.

Galatians 2:20

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

Ephesians 5:25

Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it;

Revelation 1:5

*And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. **Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,***

...a love story, written in blood on a wooden cross, erected in Judea, 2000 years ago.

