

# THROUGH THE BIBLE STUDY

## RUTH 1-4

The book of Ruth is the Hebrew version of Cinderella.

Ruth is a young lady who escapes a life of reproach and poverty by meeting a wealthy prince. Prince Boaz sweeps Ruth off her feet, and makes her his bride.

The difference of course between Ruth and Cinderella is that the book of Ruth is no fairytale - *no pumpkins turn into carriages*. This is a real-life story set amidst the hardships of daily circumstances. And the miraculous occurrences that unfold are orchestrated not by a *fairy godmother*, but by *God the heavenly Father*.

“*Ruth*” is one of two biblical books named after a woman. The other is Esther.

The book of Esther is the story of a *Hebrew woman living in a Gentile land*, while Ruth is the story of a *Gentile woman living in the land of the Hebrews*.

And both stories are prophetic of the times in which we live...

For 2000 years the Jews have been displaced from their homeland.

They have been scattered among the Gentiles. Esther foreshadows God’s providential protection and preservation of Israel over the last two millenniums.

Ruth on the other hand foreshadows God’s plan for the Gentiles.

Though Ruth is an outsider she receives the blessings God intended for the Hebrews by marrying into an Israeli family. We too have married into God's promises for the Jews. We've married a wealthy Hebrew prince named Jesus.

We've fallen in love with Jesus. He has swept us off our feet and showered us with blessings. In Christ we have gained an inheritance with God's people.

It's interesting that Ruth is the 8<sup>th</sup> book of the Hebrew canon of Scripture.

Let's recount the books we've covered so far...

*Genesis* is the book of beginnings.

*Exodus* speaks of redemption.

*Leviticus* teaches us to worship.

*Numbers* teaches us how to walk with God.

*Deuteronomy* stresses the importance of obedience.

*Joshua* is all about our victory over our enemies.

*Judges* describes what happens when we fail to fully follow.

The 9<sup>th</sup> book, *Samuel*, describes the establishment of the Kingdom.

Now think of these 9 books as an outline of Hebrew history - beginnings, redemption, worship, walk, obedience, victory, failure, ultimately God's kingdom. But in between Israel's failure - and the coming of God's kingdom - God will call out a Gentile bride for His Son Jesus... thus, the book of Ruth.

*What a cool picture!* This is why I believe the Holy Spirit not only inspired the contents of the books of the Bible, but also their arrangement and preservation.

Ruth is part of the Hebrew “*Meggilah*” - a collection of 5 books that were read at the different Hebrew feasts. The book of Ruth was always read at the feast of Pentecost. Later, Pentecost becomes the birthday of the Church. *How fitting!*

In numerous ways the story of Ruth parallels our relationship with Jesus.

The story begins, “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 dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion - Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah.”

The book of Ruth is a romance – a real story about real people - but it’s also a deeper revelation of spiritual truth. It’s also an allegory. In fact, the Holy Spirit goes as far as to even arrange the names of the people to make His point.

“*Elimelech*” means “*my God is king*”. “*Naomi*” means “*pleasant*”.

“*Bethlehem*” means “*house of bread*”. “*Judah*” means “*praise*”.

“*Ephratha*” means “*fruitful*”.

Now check this out... You’ve got a man named *God is king* with a *pleasant* wife living in prosperity, in *the house of bread*. He’s *praising* God and *bearing fruit*.

What more could a man want!

But a famine puts Elimelech’s faith to the test - and rather than *stay put* He decides to *bail out*. Rather than trust in

God's promises he takes matters into his own hands. Verse 2, "And they went to the country of Moab and remained there."

And look at the calamity that was caused by Elimelech's lack of faith... Verse 3, "Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband."

"Mahlon" means "sickness", and "Chilion" means "wasting". Both boys may've had physical problems from birth, and complications ended up leading to early exits. Both sons die and leave behind a grieving mom, and two young widows.

So far the story teaches us that the safest place to be is in the center of God's will. I'd rather be in God's will – even in the midst of howling winds and lightning storms – *it would be safer there* - than in the strongest house outside His will.

Typically, relationships with mother-in-laws are notoriously rocky.

You've heard it said, "Behind every successful man there are two people... a good wife, and a surprised mother-in-law." Hopefully, that's not true in your family.

Once, a friend and I were talking about our mother-in-laws. I mentioned mine lived in Oregon. He said, "Wow, I love my mother-in-law so much if she lived that far away I'd try to get her to move." I replied, "I've tried, but she won't go to Japan."

Hey, I'm just kidding. I love my mother-in-law, and we have a very tight relationship. So did Naomi and her two daughter-in-laws, Ruth and Orpah.

Their closeness becomes apparent when Naomi announces she's going home.

Verse 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 that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to her mother's house. The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept." Both daughter-in-laws had become so fond of Naomi they both cried over the thought of their separation. They didn't want her to leave.

"And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."

But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands? Turn back, my daughters, go - for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons, would you wait for them till they were grown? Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands?" In other words, the girls will have a much better opportunity to remarry if they stay in Moab.

“No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!” Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.”

I read where Oprah Winfrey was named after Orpah - but the midwife confused the spelling and *Orpah* turned into *Oprah*. I wish Oprah were more like Ruth, and stayed true to her family’s Christianity rather than reverting to New Age paganism.

Oprah’s show is the highest one rated talk show in television history. It’s sad that she’s using her influence to take people back to Moab instead of to Jesus.

Ruth is still holding on to Naomi, when the old gal tells her, “Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” Her statement shows just how far Naomi has drifted from God.

She’s more concerned with Ruth’s relationship with a future husband than their relationship with God. She’s encouraging her to return to her idolatrous roots.

But Ruth pleads, “Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.” Here’s one of the most beautiful expressions of devotion and friendship ever penned. Ruth locks her future and plight to Naomi and her God.

These verses are often read at weddings. It surprises some folks to realize they originally described the devotion between friends - a woman and a mother-in-law.

Verse 18, "When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

Evidently, Naomi's time in Moab – away from God – had taken its toll on her appearance. She'd aged. She was wrinkled and weathered. Her former friends barely recognize her. They squawked among each other "Is this Naomi?"

Have you ever noticed thirty year olds that looked 50? Sin takes a heavy toll.

It's been said, "Nature has a lot to do with forming a person's appearance. But after age 30 each person is responsible for his or her own face." We all wrinkle, but the life we live positions our wrinkles in the form of a smile or a scowl.

In verse 20 Naomi tells her girlfriends, "Do not call me Naomi (or pleasant); call me Mara (or bitter), for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?"

In retrospect, rather than be *led by God* her and her husband *fled in fear*. Actions that are born out of fear, not faith, always send us in the wrong direction.



But Naomi is back and life is about to get better. “So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.” It was April – the beginning of the barley harvest. That detail sets up what happens next...

Chapter 2, “There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.” *Enter Prince Charming...*

Did you hear about the young man who said to his sweetheart, “Darling, I'm not wealthy, and handsome, and I don't have a mansion, and a Mercedes, and a yacht, like Gerald Green, but I love you baby with all my heart.” The girl replied, “Well, I love you too... *but tell me more about this Gerald Green?*” Hey, Boaz was a Gerald Green - a *Hebrew heart throb* - a barley baron and eligible bachelor.

Many a girl would've loved to have had *Boaz as a bow!*

What makes the situation even more intriguing is that Boaz is related to Ruth.

He was a “*goel*” or “*a near kinsmen*” - and according to Hebrew culture it was the obligation of a family member to take a brother's widowed wife, and raise up a child to preserve his lineage. The Hebrews called it *the Law of Levirate Marriage*. “*Levir*” means “*brother-in-law*”. Deuteronomy 25 describes the law in detail.

Remember when Ruth left Moab, she must've assumed she was forfeiting her best opportunity for marriage to remain



loyal to Naomi - but that was not the case.

It's just like God to reward a person who puts *commitment above convenience*, and *loyalty ahead of liberty* - who acts on *devotion instead of emotion*. God is prone to bless a person who forfeits a *privilege* to remain true to a *principle*.

The meaning of the name "Boaz" is also interesting. It means "Lord of the harvest". And guess who Boaz represents? Jesus is our Lord of the harvest!

Verse 2 "So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor."

And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers." The Israeli welfare system was more than passing out checks. When a field was harvested the landowner was required to leave a little behind for the poor - but it was their responsibility to enter the fields behind the workers and glean, or gather the leftovers. This is why Ruth goes out to glean.

And notice what we're told in verse 3, "And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech." Notice she "just so happened." Of course, nothing just happens. God is Sovereign. He superintends all events. The rabbis have a saying, "Coincidence is not a kosher word."

Every roll of the dice – every bounce of the football – is determined by God's providence. Proverbs 16:33 puts it best, "The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD." There's no such thing as happenstance. God is at

work behind the scenes orchestrating situations to accomplish His purposes.

Here the Holy Spirit is playing cupid. He's at work on behalf of Ruth...

“Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!" Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

When Boaz comes home, guess who catches his eye?

He rushes to the foreman in charge of the gleaners, and asks about the new girl, “*who is the beautiful babe?*” God is working on both ends of this situation.

“So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab.”

And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house." Hey, she's not only *good-looking*, but *hard-working*. I married a woman just like that. Ruth was gorgeous even in work clothes.

“Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.

Boaz instructs Ruth to glean only from his field. This was for Ruth's protection. Some of the other landowners were playboys. They would try to harvest Ruth.

Verse 9, “Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you?” Boaz was clear with his workers. This girl was off-limits. For Boaz it must’ve been love at first sight...

“And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.” Boaz offers Ruth both his protection and his provision.

“So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?” And Boaz answered and said to her, “It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before.” He commends her loyalty.

“The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge.” Then she said, “Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.”

Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, He even invites Ruth up to the hacienda to eat dinner. She’s gets the special treatment. This is no ordinary gleaner girl.

Boaz offers, “Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.” Her stash was for Naomi.

Verse 15, “And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.” In other words, even if Ruth starts to glean what hasn’t yet been harvested, don’t stop her. In fact, toss out a few bundles of grain on purpose to make it easier for Ruth. Show her grace! Give her more than she can earn.

*Hey, all this and more, is how our Boaz, Jesus Christ, chooses to treat us...*

We caught His eye long before we decided to follow Him. He chose us before the foundation of the world. He wants us to glean only from His fields. Jesus desires that we bring all our needs to Him. He wants to be our sole source and sustenance. He wants to satisfy the deepest longings of our heart.

Jesus offers you and I protection... a place at His table... He even delights in tossing little bundles of blessing for us to glean. Grace governs how He treats us.

Verse 17 “So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.” An ephah was close to a bushel.

“Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you

gleaned today? And where did you work?" Girl, you hit the jackpot!

"Blessed be the one who took notice of you." Naomi saw immediately that Ruth had been the beneficiary of some special interest. Hers were not typical gleanings.

Verse 19 "So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." And that name causes Naomi to jump for joy! The old gal probably flirted with a coronary.

"Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!" And Naomi said to her, "This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives." Naomi gets excited. She starts hearing wedding bells. She's knows the Law of Levirate marriage.

But Boaz is the Lord of the harvest, and the barley still needs to be harvested. Naomi knows the nuptials can't begin until the barley harvest is complete.

We too are in the midst of a harvest – *a harvest of souls* – and Jesus is the Lord of the harvest. At the moment, there's work to do, but one day when all the barley is in the barn Jesus will come for His bride and the wedding will begin.

In the meantime we need to be patient, and help the Lord finish the harvest.

Verse 21 "Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.' "

And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field."

So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law."

In chapter 3, Ruth and Naomi are tired of his *barley*, they want the *Boaz*.

Naomi, the wise mother, knows the time has come for Ruth to make a bold move. Have you seen the commercials that promote bold moves for women?

One young lady pays for the laundering of an eligible bachelor's shirts.

A mother and her daughter muster up the courage to jump off a waterfall.

The idea is that women should make bold moves - this is exactly what Naomi suggests to Ruth. It's the end of the harvest, and she knows where Boaz will be. He has only a short time to process his grain, so he'll sleep at the threshing floor.

Verse 1 tells us, "Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor." The threshing floor was a large outdoor pavilion where the oxen would beat down the grain and process the wheat.

The men slept on sight to protect the crop from thieves and

wild animals.

Naomi tells Ruth, **Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.**" It's time to employ some feminine wiles. God's plan and a little female charm about to link arms...

Here's Naomi's plan... Ruth needs to doll herself up – take a bubble bath – dab on some Chanel # 5, put on a designer dress, and go down to the threshing floor.

After Boaz eats dinner, and settles down to sleep, Ruth needs to slip up quietly, uncover his toes, and lie at his feet until he awakes. Exposing his toes to the night air will insure that eventually his cold toes will wake him up, and he'll notice Ruth.

Hey, I like this strategy because it's also how we can abide and rest in Jesus.

First, make sure you're **washed**. Your spirit has been washed in the blood of His sacrifice. We also need to cleanse our mind and thoughts with God's Word.

Second, make sure you're **anointed**. Dab on the oil of the Holy Spirit. Rely on the Spirit. Ask Him to fill you, and make you aware of God's presence and love.

Third, make sure you're **dressed** for success - *put on Christ*. Begin to form a new identity. Learn to see yourself as



God sees you – *holy, righteous, blameless, a joint-heir with Jesus, a child of God.* Realize you're a new creation in Christ.

And fourth, make sure you **lie down at Jesus' feet.** Humble yourself before the Master. Spend time in His presence. Do whatever He tells you to do.

Verse 5 **"And (Ruth) said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."**

**So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down. Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet."**

Hey, this is a bold move for a woman at this time, in this culture. Ruth proves she's a liberated woman. She follows Naomi's instructions exactly, and the cold toes work. Surprise, surprise, Boaz wakes up and sees a woman at his feet.

He asks her in verse 9, **"Who are you?" So she answered, "I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative."** The phrase, **"take your maidservant under your wing"** - or more figuratively, **"under your cloak"** was the equivalent of a marriage proposal.

This is a bold move. Ruth is popping the question to Boaz!

Verse 10 **"Then he said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter!"**

**For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether**

poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.” Why is it that some girls think they have to compromise their morals and lower their standards just to get a guy?

Girls, what a lack of faith! *A woman with faith won't be a flirt.* Ladies, God has a Boaz for you! He's got a Matthew Macounahey or Denzil Washington that's a Christian, no less. But you've got to trust God and be a virtuous woman.

Don't forget, a virtuous man isn't looking for a floosey. He wants a woman with a good reputation. A woman everyone knows is virtuous. Ruth had gained that kind of reputation. And it's one of the reasons Boaz was attracted to Ruth.

Boaz responds to Ruth in verse 12, “Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you - good; let him do it.

But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.” Boaz' answer is “Yes, but...” and “Yes, if...” As I often say, “No wedding ever goes off without a hitch.”

Boaz will be happy to marry Ruth, but there's just one problem.

Though Boaz is a *near kinsman*, he's not *the nearest kinsmen*. There's a closer kin with first dibs at redeeming Elimelech's land, and marrying his daughter-in-law.

Here is proof that Boaz was a principled man. Remember this story takes place in the days of the Judges when

“everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”

Everyone that is, except Boaz and Ruth. In an age of compromise it's so refreshing to find two people willing to do things God's way – *by the book*.

Hey, this was risky. Bo and Ruthie are in love. Marriage is the goal. What if this nearer kinsmen exercises his right? Boaz will be busted. *But Boaz believes in God.*

He trusts that God is in control, and if God wants he and Ruth married God will see to it. Boaz knows the worst move he can make is to take a short-cut.

When we take matters into our own hands, and try to manipulate the situation we mess it up. Remember, God's will, done God's way will have God's blessing.

Do you believe that truth? Do you really believe that what's done God's way will gain God's blessing? When will we learn that our short-cuts usually become long detours? Guys, the shortest distance between two points is the will of God.

Remember the last 5 chapters of Judges – nasty, ruthless, barbaric acts occur in Israel. Yet in contrast, here, two people choose to live life and conduct marriage God's way... God blesses them, *and anyone else who follows their example.*

Here's a good formula for life - trust God and do the right thing.

Hey, always remember if Boaz had not been a man of principle – a man of conviction - he would've ended up like the rest of the nation – *ruthless*.

And notice too, the honorable precaution he takes in verse

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

Boaz did all he could to save Ruth's reputation from the rumor mill. He didn't want to give the town gossips anything to chew on. Ladies, a guy who really loves you will do everything he can to protect your reputation - *not put it in jeopardy*.

At the end of chapter 3, Boaz makes another smart move. Every soon-to-be husband needs to follow his example. Verse 15 "Also he said, "Bring the shawl that is on you and hold it." And when she held it, he measured six ephahs of barley, and laid it on her. Then she went into the city."

Ruth takes home to Naomi six bushels of barley – an enormous amount.

And I hope you see what Boaz is up to? *He's getting in good with mom. He's making points with his mother-in-law. What a guy! Guys, take a cue from Boaz.*

"So when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "Is that you, my daughter?"

Then she told her all that the man had done for her. And she said, "These six ephahs of barley he gave me; for he said to me, 'Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'" Boaz has won the girl – but you seal the deal by winning over her family. Girls, don't marry a schmoozer, but make sure the guy respects your family.

Well, in the last verse of chapter 3, Naomi gives Ruth a near

impossible command, "Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

Ruthie's future - the love of her life - is in limbo, and she's expected to sit still?

Hey, here's the acid test of faith. After we've done all that we can do are we willing to sit still and trust God to do His work? In Psalm 46:10 the Lord Himself tells us, "Be still and know that I am God." We need to learn to wait on God!

Chapter 4, "Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down.

And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.' " And he said, "I will redeem it." With those words Boaz' heart must've skipped a beat. But he still doesn't know about Ruth.

"Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance." In other words, Elimilech's ground

and his girl go together. The property and the princess are a package deal.

Hey, always read the fine print before you sign the contract. Suddenly, this guy backs down. Verse 6, “**And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance."** In other words, “*what will my wife think?*”

Imagine this guy walking into his house that night, and announcing, “**Honey, guess who I brought home for dinner? Sweetheart, I finally got you some help with the housework. Remember last night when you said it could take two people to do your job...**” I mean, *how do you break it to your wife that she’s got company?*

Yes, if this man marries Ruth it’ll ruin far more than just his inheritance.

He tells Boaz, “**You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it.**” And that was exactly what Boaz had wanted to hear all along!

“**Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel.**” This was an ancient way of saying that he was passing on to Boaz his right to walk the *land*, and marry the *lady*.

“**Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal.**” The passing of the sandal signed the contract. It made it official.



Hey, I want you to know that this story strikes a lot closer to home than you might first think. This wicked world – the land we tread – once belonged to God.

When the Creator made man, He gave us dominion over the earth.

But man sinned and forfeited that dominion and control over to Satan. In John 16:7, Jesus calls Satan “**the ruler of this world**”. But according to God’s law when a parcel is lost there’s always the possibility of redemption. It can be bought back, or redeemed. What Boaz did for Elimilech, Jesus has done for the human family.

The book of Ruth stresses a vital point. Redemption has to be purchased by a blood relative – *a near kinsmen*. That’s why Ruth and Christmas go together.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem to a maid named Mary. He joined the human race to be our near kinsmen. As our relative Jesus positioned Himself to redeem a world that had been lost to sin and Satan. On the cross Jesus paid the redemption price.

The question though is why did He do it?

Jesus is not only a citizen of Earth – He’s Lord of the universe – He owns billions of planets just like our own. I’m sure if the only thing Jesus had to gain by going to the cross was just another planet He would’ve spared Himself the trouble.

But Jesus, like Boaz, was not as interested in a *parcel of land* as He was a *particular lady*. The ground and the girl go together. The land and the lady are a package deal. Jesus



redeemed the earth to marry the bride. And we are that lady. We're the bride of Christ. Jesus is our Boaz. We are His Ruth – His Gentile bride.

What a marvelous picture – “*Ruth*” is all about the romance of redemption.

Verse 9 “And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, "We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah (mothers of the 12 tribes – moms of the nation), the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.

May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman."

The tribe of Judah became the preeminent tribe. The name “*Jews*” come from *Judah*. Remember the Messiah, Jesus Christ, came from the lineage of Judah.

The remainder of chapter 4 explains another reason why the book of Ruth was so significant to the Hebrews. It cast a light

on the origins of the most important family in Hebrew history – in fact, the most strategic family in all the earth.

And we're not talking the Windsors of Great Britain - or the Bushs of Texas – or the Kennedys of Massachusetts - or the Bowdens of Tallahassee - or the Waltons of Walton Mountain – we're talking about the family of King David of Jerusalem.

Later God promises David his sons will sit on the throne of Israel forever. His heir will reign over all the earth. He'll be an eternal king over an eternal kingdom.

Boaz and Ruth have a baby boy named "Obed". This Obed has a son named "Jesse". Jesse has a son named "David" - and years later, several branches down the family tree a son of David is born named "Jesus"... who fulfils God's promise.

But I'm ahead of the story. Verse 13, "So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel!

And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than 7 sons, has borne him." When Naomi got back into God's will, God chose to bless her abundantly.

Remember what Naomi said to the ladies of Bethlehem when she first returned home from Moab? "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara (or bitter) for the Almighty has dealt bitterly with me." But at the end of the story, *bitter* becomes *blessed*.

“Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. Also the neighbor women gave him 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.”

And in keeping with the allegorical aspects of the book here’s another pertinent point... The Hebrew word “Obed” means “*servicing*” - and it’s no accident that the marriage between Boaz and Ruth produced a child name “*servicing*”.

That’s exactly what happens when you and I embrace our Boaz, Jesus Christ. Our union with Jesus births within us a desire to serve God by serving others.

Verse 18 wraps it up, “Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.”

*If you’re single sister...* may the Lord bless you with a Boaz.  
*And if you’re a single brother...* may He send you a Ruth.  
*And if you’re married...* may the Lord bless you with loyal daughters and daughter-in-laws like Ruth, and principled sons and sons-in-law like Boaz.

*And if you’re a person who feels lost...* You feel out of place everywhere you go. You feel like a stranger even in your own home - then there is a Boaz who has his eye on you. He loves you. He’ll purposely tosses out little bundles of blessing. He’s already paid your redemption price, and He wants to take you as His bride...

*His name is Jesus. Lie down at His feet, and do what He says.*