

RUTH

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HISTORY:

The events take place during the time when the judges ruled in Israel. This was a period in which God's people would move from disobedience to defeat to deliverance. Because everyone did what was right in his or her own eyes, sin was rampant and God's people had hardened hearts. As they fell into idolatry and immorality, God would bring judgment upon them, so that they would repent. Ruth is the bridge from the wickedness of the times of the Judges, to the glorious reign of King David.

FAMILY NAMES:

Names, meaning, and how they fit into the picture of the Book.

A. ELIMELECH. His name means "God is my king." In the days when there was no king in Israel, there was one man, at least, who looked to the God of Heaven to be king of his life. This shows that in every apostasy God has a few who have stood true to their faith in Him, just as Enoch and Elijah during the apostasy of Ahab. But what happened—a Famine!

B. NAOMI. Her name means "my pleasant one." Truly this is a wonderful name to have. However, because of her life of wandering and backsliding, she renounced the name and requested that she be called "Mara", meaning "bitter." Ten years in the land of Moab brought her home in a bitter condition.

C. MAHAGON. This means "sickly, weak." The offspring of Elimelech and Naomi were sickly. By inference, we note the spiritual decline of the parents, which is manifested in the names of their children. Usually children reap a portion of what is sown by the father and mother. When there is a decline in spirituality at the head of the home, the effect is soon noticeable in the children. Likewise, when the pastor and official board of a church cease to be spiritual, the result may soon be discerned. In the same way, when the head officers and officials of a church organization no longer have the missionary and evangelistic spirit, then worldliness creeps into their lives, and it is soon apparent in other avenues of the church.

D. CHILON. His name means "consumptive, pining, wasting away, declining." He is possessed with a germ and a disease that will terminate in death. Again the same spiritual drifting of the parents is being manifested in the second child but in a worse form, showing their spiritual state is rapidly declining as years go on.

POINT:

Throughout the Old Testament the names of the people picture the circumstances surrounding their birth. When the angel announced to Abraham and Sarah that Isaac was to be born, she laughed. When he was born, they named him Isaac, meaning "laughter."

¹ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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When Joseph was sold by his brethren into Egypt, he went through many hardships and prison experience, which finally led him to the throne. While there he married a Gentile wife, who gave birth to a son. Joseph called his name "Manasseh," which means "He hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house." (Genesis 41:51).

Likewise, around these parent's lives, there no doubt, existed an unrevealed reason for them to name these sons "sickly" and "wasting away."

E. ORPAH. Married Chilion; Her name means "a portion of the neck and back.; double-minded" When Naomi left Moab for the land of Bethlehem, she tried to persuade her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to the land of Moab, but they both declared, "We will return with thee unto thy people." (Ruth 1:10). Again she tried to persuade them to return to Moab. "Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her." (Ruth 1:14). Thus, we see, the meaning of her name was fulfilled in her act when she turned her back on Bethlehem to worship idols in the land of Moab. How many have started like Orpah, but because of persecution, the separation that the Christian life demands, or the mocking of some friends, and you turn your backs and return to your idol worship again.

F. RUTH. Married Mahlon; Her name means "satisfied", "*my God in Him will I trust*" (**Ps.91:2**). Ruth was much like the man in the 91st Psalm, who set his love upon the Lord, (**91:14**), and because of that fact God said, "*With long life will I satisfy him, and shew him my salvation*" (**91:16**). Many have tried to find satisfaction in different things, but the only lasting satisfaction that is worthwhile for time and eternity is to be found in Jesus Christ. Yet this satisfaction is not complete, for man still dwells in the realms of sin, still has a decaying body, and still lives in the midst of temptations. Ruth did not find her satisfaction in Moab, in Naomi, or in Bethlehem-Judah, but she found it when she said, "your people shall be my people, and your God, shall be my God" v.16.

The setting of the first part of the Book of Ruth is Bethlehem-Judah. These two words, Bethlehem-Judah, with their meaning the "house of bread," later becomes the birthplace of Him Who is the "Bread of Heaven," Jesus Christ. The other, Judah, the tribe of which our Savior was a descendant, means "Praise the Lord." However, at this time we find in this country of Bethlehem-Judah, where there was supposed to have been bread and worship, there was none, only famine. In the very place where you would look for plenty, there was want. In Palestine, the country in which was Bethlehem-Judah, they did not have rivers as in Egypt upon which to rely for water for their crops. They had to depend entirely on Heaven's mercy to send them rain, and if the Heavens were shut by God to give them rain, nothing but shortage, suffering, and death lay before them.

POINT:

It is the same with us in the spiritual life. If we do not have spiritual rain coming from the open heavens, it means a famine for our souls and spiritual death in the future.

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WHEN JUDGES RULED:

1:1a 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. The periods of the judges were some of the most bleakest in Israel's history. ²In the days when the Judges ruled meant that this account begins in the closing days of the Judges, a four-hundred year period of general anarchy and oppression when the Israelites were not ruled by kings, but by periodic deliverers whom God raised up when the nation sought Him again. Notable among the Judges were Gideon, Samson, and Deborah; each of these were raised up by God, not to rule as kings, but to lead Israel during a specific challenge, and not to go back to obscurity. The days when the Judges ruled were actually dark days for Israel; the period was characterized by the phrase everyone did what was right in his own eyes (**Judges 17:6, 18:1, 19:1, and 21:25**).

1:1b FAMINE:

At this point in time, the land is stricken with a famine. The first five verses of Ruth form what we have called "**orientation**", it sets the scene, presenting the family about whom the story is told and its disastrous history which poses the problem. This verse doesn't even give the man's name until verse 2.

A famine in the land: God specifically promised there would always be plenty in the land if Israel was obedient. A famine in the land means that Israel, as a nation, was not being obedient unto the Lord (**Deut.11:13-17**).

**Famine is finished when we face the Father.
Rain is restored when we repent.
Pestilence passes away when we pray.**

1:1c SOJOURN:

The family went and "*sojourned*" (stopover, a temporary stay) in the country of Moab until the famine was over. The intention was to return to Bethlehem. When God sends affliction, it is not for us to run away from, but to turn to God and humble ourselves, pray, seek His face, and turn from our wicked ways.

The certain man with his family left the land of Israel from Bethlehem to sojourn in the pagan country of Moab, because of famine. Bethlehem was a rich agricultural area, in the country of Judah –the home of David and birth place of Jesus (**1Sam.16:1, 4; Lk.2:11**). Bethlehem's name means "**House of Bread**", but times were tough, so he went... Yet the short time he intended to be gone, turned into ten, tragedy-filled years - and he never returned to Israel. Instead of being part of the solution by repenting, this man sells his property in Bethlehem and takes off. He brings his wife and two sons to Moab to wait out the famine. Whenever we leave God's place and venture into the world, we always tell ourselves that it's only temporary. But rarely is that the case. Once in the world, we find excuse after excuse for staying in it. If you are truly one of God's children, He will arrange it so that you're so miserable, you will come to your senses and return to your heavenly Father. What a good God we serve!

There are three countries to which people living in Canaan have journeyed: Egypt, Babylon, and Moab. They didn't go to Egypt, nor to Babylon, but to Moab. Rather than humbly repent and

² http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/view.cgi?book=ru&chapter=1&verse=1#Ru1_1
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acknowledge their backslidden condition, many have gone to Moab.

1:1d MOAB:

³The Moabites were the descendants of a terrible union. After Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed, Lot was afraid to stay in the city of Zoar. So he headed up to the mountains and stayed with his two daughters in a cave. Thinking that this was their only chance to continue the family line, Lot's daughters got him drunk and conceived children with him (**Gen.19:32-36**). "*And the first-born bore a son, and called his name Moab; he is the father of the Moabites to this day*" **Gen.19:37**. This is where the Moabites came from.

Later, when the nation of Israel camped next to the land of the Moabites, before entering Canaan, king Balak tried to get Balaam (a magician or soothsayer) to curse Israel. However, he was unable to curse what God had blessed. **Num.25:1** "...*the people began to commit whoredom with the daughters of Moab.*" The women of Moab enticed the Israelites which resulted in God's judgment against Israel.

Under the rule of an overweight Moabite King Eglon, they oppressed the Israelites for 18 years back in **Judges 3:14**. That oppression ended when the second judge of the Israelites, Ehud, the left-handed Benjamite, killed him. Apparently, the events of the book of Ruth occurred some time after this oppression.

1:1e STEPS DOWNWARD:

Elimelech and Naomi left Bethlehem -- the house of bread -- just to sojourn in the land of Moab. Things like famines would cause people to move from one area to the next in order to survive. Next we see they continued there. The last clause of the fourth verse read "*and they dwelled there about ten years.*" They didn't intend to stay there. They were like many folks who depart from God to seek an easier way, but finally unite with the cold, dead dwellers of Moab. Some of them leave a spiritual church because they don't like the preacher, because they were unsuccessful in retaining their position on the official board, because their Sunday School Class, which they had taught for a few years, was given to another, or perhaps because of even smaller things. The demotion was too great; and consequently they united with some church less spiritual. They united with Moab.

But there's a second step downward, which I want you to notice; "*they took them wives of the women of Moab*" (v. 4). The very people whom "*God forbade to enter the congregation of the Lord even to the tenth generation,*" (**Deut. 23:3**), the two sons, Mahlon and Chilion took wives for themselves instead of remaining as a separate people, they married the very people who had previously tried to curse Israel under the kingship of Balak (**Numbers 22**). Here's a warning to parents: When you drift from the Lord Jesus Christ and from a spiritual place of worship, there is no telling what the outcome will be to you or your offspring. Unholy alliances have been the downfall of many of God's people. When Solomon took to himself wives of the Moabites, the Ammonites, and the Hittites, he began his departure from the living God (**I Kings 11:1**).

People often become so entangled by the meshes of the world in a backslidden state that it is very difficult and sometimes even impossible to bring them to the place where they once were. **This is a warning for the young people:** to be sure that they make their choice in marriage according to the Will

³ <http://www.rondaniel.com/library/08-Ruth/Ruth0101.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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of God. Many young people that were once Spirit-filled workers in God's vineyard, soul-winners in His Kingdom have married the wrong person, only to settle down to live a wasted life ending in disaster. And now, the only life they have to live ends with want and woe.

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 Bethlehem-Judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.** The man's name is finally given El-ee-MEH-lek, means "God is king"- but was he really living like God was his king? His wife Naomi's name is "*my pleasant one; my delight.*" And I think we learn something about the condition of their sons Makh-LONE and Kil-YONE at birth. Makh-LONE means "sickly," and Kil-YONE means "*consumptive, pining, wasting away, declining.*" They must not have been healthy, strapping boys. They all came and stayed there in Moab.

DAD DIES, SONS MARRY:

1:3 **And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.** Naomi is left a widow, for her husband Elimelech has died, and left her with the two grown sons.

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. Remaining in Moab, the two boys married Moabite women: Or-PAW and Ruth. This is not necessarily a good thing. The Moabites were not godly people. There was some bad history between Israel and Moab. The Moabites were worshipers of the god Chemosh, a deity whose worship was similar to that of Baal. When Israel was about to cross into the Promised Land, it was the Moabites that caused such great trouble to Israel through the hiring of the prophet Balaam to put a curse on Israel. God said, "*An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the Lord; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the Lord for ever*" **Deut. 23:3**. The law of God said to Israel regarding the other nations, "*Furthermore, you shall not intermarry with them; you shall not give your daughters to their sons, nor shall you take their daughters for your sons*" **Deut. 7:3**. Clearly, marrying Moabites was against the law of God. And like sinful compromise in our own lives, this compromise turned their short stay into a long-term residency. Originally they were to sojourn temporarily - now they dwelt there for ten years.

THREE WIDOWS :

1: 5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband. A few months roll by, and Mahlon is taken sick (name means sickly). Naomi's grief increases and Ruth is left a widow. A second tombstone is erected, and there's a second testimony that departure from God ends in disaster. The last hope was that the seed-line would not be destroyed remained in Chilion. But one day they notice that his face seemed flushed, and soon a lingering disease sets in (name means consumptive, pining, wasting away, declining). In spite of protests, tears, and sorrow, they bid good-bye to the last male who came out of Bethlehem. A third marker is erected to tell the story of the departure from God to the land of Moab. When Mahlon and Chilion also die prematurely, suddenly they are a house of three widows. Understand that these were different times than we are now living in. Today, a woman can find a job, support herself, and provide for her own needs. But back then, widows had to depend upon the kindness of others to support them. It was a miserable existence - especially for an Israelite living in the land of Moab.

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BACK TO BETHLEHEM:

1:6 Then she arose wth her daughters-in-law, that she mght 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. Word had gotten to Naomi that the famine was over in Bethlehem. Naomi could have stayed in Moab all of her life wishing things were different, but she did something so she could receive what God had for her. Many hear of the good things God is doing in the lives of others, and only wish they could have some of it - instead of actually setting out to receive it as Naomi did!

1:7 Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law wth her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. As the three of them head off towards Israel, Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to go on home to their mother's house. This was so that they would be able to marry again.

1:8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the Lord deal kindly wth you, as ye have dealt wth the dead, and wth me. But Naomi knew they had no chance of marrying any more of her sons - because she didn't have any more! In the tragic lives of these three women (Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth) Naomi tells them, "*Go, return each to your mother's house...*" But they obviously both loved her. According to the law of God, the women would have to marry a brother of their husbands. "*When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be {married} outside {the family} to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her*" **Deut. 25:5.**

Have you ever had to transition somewhere else? Naomi knew she couldn't help them any longer, and she didn't want them to follow her into uncertainty because they would not be able to marry again in her family. The Law said that the nearest relative of the dead husband should care for the widow, but Naomi had no relatives in Moab, and she did not know if any of her relatives were alive in Israel. Orpah and Ruth showed tremendous respect in their duty as wives, and great respect in the memory of their husband's death. She prayed "*the Lord deal kindly with them, as they have dealt with the dead, and with her.*" "**Deal kindly**" is the ancient Hebrew word "*hesed.*" "*Hesed encompasses deeds of mercy performed by a more powerful party for the benefit of the weaker one.*" (*Huey*).⁴

1: 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. The prayer continues: "*the Lord grant that you may find rest each in the house of their husband. Then she kissed them: and they lifted up their voice, and wept*" v.8, 9. Naomi described marriage as a place of rest. And that the second marriage would be more blessed than the first; and that they would find rest after all their sorrow. This was a very emotional time for all three. God can make it so! With these words Naomi freely blessed them. She prayed that they would remarry.

1:10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return wth thee unto thy people. Orpah and Ruth truly wanted to stay with Naomi and return back with her to her country (Bethlehem), because there is nothing like being somewhere stable and secure with those you love. Naomi just wanted a better life

⁴ <http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/view.cgi?book=ru&chapter=001>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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for her daughters-in-law and so did they.

1:11 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?—Naomi reminds them that there are no more sons in her womb; that there are no more husbands where she's going. Naomi's comment here refers to the "*Levirate Marriage*", where the obligation of a dead man's brother is to care for his widow (**Deut.25:5-10**). The Law kept the widow from poverty and it provided a way for the family name of the dead husband to continue.

1:12 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;— She encouraged them to remain in their own homeland and remarry. Three times Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to return (vv8, 11, 12). She lets them know that she is too old to be looking for a husband. She didn't even have hope of finding one or God sending her one. So if they were even looking in that direction or contemplating it, she makes it very clear by saying: if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons. This means they still would be too old to even wait till her sons become of age for them to marry if she became pregnant tonight.

1:13 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. She's still saying, why waste your years waiting for my sons to grow up? - Would you wait that long? This was unreasonable for them to do. "*For it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the Lord is gone out against me.*"⁵ She grieves much over the situation because she feels that she is responsible for the fate of the two girls. By this statement she acknowledges, "I am the sinner, but you are the sufferers. I have disobeyed God in bringing my sons to the land of Moab where they intermarried against His commandments. Because of this, the hand of the Lord is upon me; it grieves me for your sakes." This shows that no man liveth or dieth to himself. He either helps to take men to Heaven or helps to drag them down to hell. Your life either lifts your loved ones, neighbors, and friends, or causes them to drift farther from God. Naomi might have not been thinking straight because of her grief, but she did not encourage them to trust in the God she served.

1:14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. The emotions shown were the evidence of the real relationship of love between Naomi and her daughters-in-law. A choice had to be made. There comes a time and place in our following after God where it comes down to doing.

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. Naomi uses Orpah's decision to prompt Ruth to make the same decision. This is the fourth time she says go **back** to your home; **your people**, and this time she says to **(her) gods**. How could Naomi encourage Ruth and Orpah to return to their false gods? This would surely condemn them eternally? Serving the gods of Moab (or any others) was an abomination to God. All I can say is

⁵ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>

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that God knows what He's doing. He has given these women a choice. There was something special that turned this moment into a God-moment. I don't know what "word" was quickened in Ruth for her to cling to Naomi, but I do know God was speaking. I believe that she didn't want to go back to those false gods that she was used to. I believed she had heard about the true and living God from Naomi and wanted to experience life in His presence.

But when Naomi mentioned to Ruth that Orpah had returned to her pagan gods, that was the worst unkindness of all that she would go back to. Their ultimate blessing would have been to leave their land, their people, their false religion, and to identify with the Israelites and with their God. One of the hardest things in the world is to get a person to give up a false religion or a religion with no life or spirituality. So Orpah and Ruth were tested to see whether they were ready to give up relatives and religion.

1:16 Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:— Ruth was a Moabitess, but that didn't stop her from worshipping the true God, nor did it stop God from accepting her worship and heaping great blessings upon her. Ruth is a perfect example of God's partiality. And this in itself is a confession of her faith in the God of Israel. There are six confessions in Ruth's decision:

(1)⁶"Whither thou goest, I will go" and "where thou lodgest, I will lodge." – **Her submission.**

- Her surrender was so complete that she desired to walk in the footsteps of another. Likewise, Ruth left the land of the curse for the land of the covenant.
- She has completely renounced all freedom of choice and commits herself into the care and keeping of another. Likewise, the believer who yields completely to Christ may look to Him as the source of his supply.

(2)"Thy people shall be my people." and "thy God shall be my God." – **Her acceptance.**

- This meant a separation from all her old associates and an acceptance of a people whom she had never known. Ruth's definite decision proclaimed her severance from Moab and all its idolatrous worship.
- She makes this a personal matter and says, "He shall be my God." She wanted a personal God for propitiation, power, protection, and provision.

Abram left his home after being commanded to do so by God. Elimelech left the "*house of bread*" without repenting, and sojourned to a pagan place too long, attaching himself with the wrong community. The Prodigal son left his home. Well, we know what happened to him—he had to go back! However, Ruth left her pagan homeland on her own initiative, despite the protest of her mother-in-law, in order to come under the wings of God. The arrival of the two women in Bethlehem marked the beginning of a new life for 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. She was determined to abide with Naomi.

(3) "Where thou diest, will I die." and "there will I be buried." – **Her consecration.**

- Her consecration went as far as the last breath of her earthly career.

⁶ <http://www.baptistbiblebelievers.com/>
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- b. Her love had reached its highest peak and its greatest abandonment. How unlike the natural man was she, who thinks of this life only, who lives as if it terminated in death, seldom thinking of the life beyond the grave. She did not want even her bones, the remains of her earthly career, to be buried in Moab. She desired her remains to lie on God's territory.

1:18 When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

When Naomi **saw that she was "steadfastly minded to go with her,"** she was silent and was convinced that Ruth had made the choice, not because of human ties but on the grounds of faith that there was bread (CHRIST) in Bethlehem.

SUMMARY:

The story of Ruth begins at a time when the judges ruled. It is a series of setbacks. **1**Naomi and her husband and two sons left their homeland in Bethlehem-Judah on account of famine, and sojourned to Moab. **2**The persons involved are Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons: Mahlon and Chilion, and they all stayed. **3**Then Naomi is left a widow, for her husband Elimelech has died, and left her with the two grown sons. **4**Her sons marry Moabite women Orpah and Ruth, and they dwelled there for ten years. **5**And then her sons Mahlon and Chilion die an early death, leaving two widows in the house of Naomi. **6**After hearing that bread has come to her homeland, she got up with her daughters-in-law, to leave Moab and return to Bethlehem-Judah, for the Lord had visited His people, to give them bread. **7**As the three widow women head off towards Israel, **8**Naomi tells her daughters-in-law (Orpah and Ruth) to "*to return to their mother's house.*" **9**"*The Lord grant you that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. ...she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept*"(**1:1-9**).

10Orpah and Ruth truly wanted to stay with Naomi and return back with her to her country (Bethlehem), so **11**Naomi reminds them that there are no more sons in her womb; that there are no more husbands where she's going. **12**She encouraged them to remain in their own homeland and remarry. Three times Naomi tells her daughters-in-law to return (vv8, 11, 12). **13**She does not want them to waste their years waiting for sons to grow up - Would you wait that long? She grieves much over the situation because she feels that she is responsible for the fate of the two girls because of this, the hand of the Lord is gone out against her. **14**The emotions shown were the evidence of the real relationship of love between Naomi and her daughters-in-law. "*They lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her.*" **15**Naomi uses Orpah's decision to prompt Ruth to make the same decision—to go back to her people and her gods. **16**And Ruth tells Naomi: "*Don't make me leave you for I want to go wherever you go, and live wherever you live; your people shall be my people, and your God shall be my God*"(v.16TLB). **17**"*Where thou diest, will I die.*" and "*there will I be buried.*" – Her consecration. "*And may the Lord do terrible things to me if I allow anything, but death to separate us.*" **18**So when Naomi saw that Ruth had made up her mind, she stopped urging her. (**1:10-18**).

God has given people a choice to choose whatever they want. If you want a better life, God has given

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us that choice to choose. We don't have to stay stuck. Life is in your hands to choose God! The women in this story are in their different places of life to meet Jesus. Several times Naomi tells Orpah and Ruth to go back home to Moab, to your people, to your familiarity, to where you feel comfortable, even to your gods. Now if people tell you to go back, you might think they didn't want you or need you. The love was there, but for Orpah to change and not go back to familiarity was not in the cards; not in her destiny! Only one had ears to hear and make the right choice. To leave your home and go to another city or even another country would be a hard decision to make, unless there was a "peace" that came over you and assured you that this is a wise choice for you, you wouldn't do it.

Moving takes great faith, particularly if you don't know anybody; and it takes even greater faith to move in a community of people of a different faith. It's good when you have another to cling to. Naomi is old and there was a love-tie between the two.

Ruth looked pass the physical to the Supernatural Supplier—God the Greater One!—"Bethlehem", the house of bread. God had given her an outlet. It was the beginning of a new community and a new life. It would be challenging, but when Ruth abandoned all for God in speech and action, God turned His unveiling power to be without limits. Ruth had set her mind on going with Naomi and nothing Naomi could say would discourage her. Her confession was the seal of it all! There was no doubt Ruth chose wisely her new community to dwell in. "*Whither thou goest, I will go*" and "*where thou lodgest, I will lodge*." "*Thy people shall be my people*." and "*thy God shall be my God*." *Where thou diest, will I die*." and "*there will I be buried*."

APPLICATION:

Commitment Demands a Choice:

- seeing where you come from, yet allowing God to predict your future;
- seeing as the prodigal son, yet saying I want to go back to my father's house of plenty;
- seeing that if your joy is gone, and then taking action to do something about it.

It's a future of trust and faith in God, demonstrating undeniable and unquestionable commitment by faith. Through crisis, there's only "**One**" to trust in—God! And that means turning from the problem to the "**Problem Solver**." That's what Ruth did! She went from a bad situation and became committed to a new community of believers which later placed her in the lineage of Jesus Christ. How Glorious!!!

If you make a choice to follow Jesus, understand that there will be times when you will be tempted to walk away. Will you? Don't allow convenience to be your way out. Be fearful of separating from God, rather than family.⁷ Can people look at your life, just as Ruth looked at Naomi's, and say "*I want your God to be my God!*"? It will be your trust in God, and turning towards Him in tough times, that will often be the thing that draws others to the Lord.

[TOP](#)

⁷ <http://www.studylight.org/com/guz/view.cgi?book=ru&chapter=001>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

RUTH 2:1-18

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[NEXT 3:9-11](#)

SYNOPSIS:

Ruth Is Not Afraid To Work:

2:1-4 ⁸Ruth knows no one there (*Bethlehem*). In fact, she is probably looked upon with some suspicion by the townspeople because she is an outsider; yes, she is an outcast being a Moabite. She realized that she had a responsibility to provide for the needs of her mother-in-law. It should be obvious that Ruth and Naomi are in great poverty. Naomi still owns the land which was originally her husband's by inheritance. However, she does not have enough money to even work the land. How could they even eat? They are so poor that the only way that Ruth can provide for them is to go out to someone else's field and pick up the grain which the reapers drop onto the ground. God, in His infinite love and wisdom, had made provision for the poor in His law. In Leviticus 19, the Lord commanded, *Lev. 19:9-10 "Now when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap to the very corners of your field, neither shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. Nor shall you glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather the fallen fruit of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the needy and for the stranger. I am the Lord your God."* There was only one thing for her to do. She must go out and work in the fields to secure whatever she could find to satisfy the physical hungers which she and Naomi had.

"Gleaning" was God's plan: farmers weren't allowed to pick their fields bare during the harvest. They had to leave the corners of the property, and couldn't harvest with more than one pass through the field. This would leave enough "*leftovers*" for any poor people that needed food. You know everyone did not adhere to God's plan. Some farmers would throw obstacles in the way of the poor and others would even forbid them from gleaning in their fields. That's why Ruth said, "...**In whose sight I shall find grace (2:2)**." She had no idea of where to go to glean. She had no friends to protect her from the rowdiness which always seemed to be present in the fields. She was new in the community. Who would give her a helping hand? Ruth's situation takes you back to her statement in verse 17 of Chapter one, where she expresses her confidence and her trust in the Lord God. As she headed out to the fields that day, she prayed to God asking that He might guide her footsteps to the right fields where she might glean grain to provide for her and Naomi's needs.

Now there is an interesting statement in **verse 3**. The KJV expresses it this way, "**and her "hap" (chanced upon, happened or fortune) was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz.**" There was a lot riding on Ruth's choice of gleaning location. If she hadn't chosen Boaz's field, they never would have met; King David and King Solomon never would have been born; Jesus wouldn't have been born in Bethlehem! All of this, riding on which field Ruth decided to glean in! We might say that this was quite a coincidence. But you will have to believe in God's leading. God directed her to the field of a man who would not only have compassion on her need for food, but also compassion on her need for a redeemer. Isn't that just like God! As He is providing for our immediate need, He is often orchestrating to meet our greater need.

Greetings:

You will note in **verse 4** as Boaz greets the servants that he is very "*hands on*" in his prosperity and with his servants. Notice the relationship that the landowner Boaz has with the reapers: He speaks blessing to them, saying, "**May the Lord be with you.**" And see what their response is: "**May the Lord bless you.**"

⁸ <http://rondaniel.com/library/08-Ruth/Ruth0201.html>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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Boaz and those who worked for him understood that the source of their prosperity was God. Although they planted and then harvested the field, the watering and the yield came from God. Boaz is wealthy and notice where he is—he is out in the field with his foreman and his concern is to his workmen and the harvest. This also reveals a little about the character of Boaz as a man who followed the Law and cared for the poor. If you want to know a man's relation with God, you need to find out how far God has saturated to the details of his everyday life.

A Hard Worker

2:5-7 Ruth was just a woman in the fields of Boaz, then Boaz turns his concern to this woman he sees in his field and asked about her. It was apparently unusual for an attractive woman to be gleaning the fields after the reapers; and it is obvious that Ruth was particularly attractive, catching the eye of Boaz. The servant in charge of the reapers told him ^{2:6} "**It Is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.**" He also told how she worked: ^{2:7} "...she came and hath continued even from the morning until now." We are called to good works and to have good work ethics - that alone is a tremendous witness.

- *First*, we see Ruth's initiative to care for her mother-in-law.
- *Second*, we see Ruth's humility. She knows how to take initiative without being presumptuous. She asked for permission.
- *Third*, she went behind the reapers.
- *Fourth*, we see her hard work. She is an amazing worker.

She does not demand a handout. She does not presume the right even to glean. She had said, "Pray, let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers." She is like another foreign woman who came to Jesus and said, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs" to which Jesus responded by extolling her faith.

PROVISIONS SECURED:

2:8 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:— It just so happened, that Ruth had come to a part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech. God is gracious and sovereign even when He is silent. As *Prov. 16:9* says, "A man's mind plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps." Boaz approaches Ruth and shows her great kindness, even though she is a foreigner. He provides food by telling her to **work in his field and not in another, and stay close behind his maidens.**

2:9 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. He provides protection by telling the young men not to touch her. And he provides for her thirst by telling her to **drink from what the men have drawn in their vessels.** So all of Boaz's wealth and godliness begin to turn for Ruth's favor, securing every provision she would ever need. He only asks her to stay in this field, **Go not to glean in another field** (2:8). ⁹The Lord also has promised that He will provide our needs with the same condition of looking to Him, and not another. Naomi and Elimelech should have learned this lesson earlier, than the hard way down in Moab, when they had doubted the provision of God in Bethlehem, and wandered off (Moab being the world's way). But Ruth was single-minded and was dedicated to live by faith – firstly to Naomi and to Naomi's

⁹ <http://www.jesusplusnothing.com/studies/online/ruthchapter2.htm>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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God—whom she had made her God; and soon to come, showing that same dedication to Boaz.

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?— Ruth is shaking her head - "I don't get it. I just do not get it! Why are you so kind to me? I'm a Moabite!" "Why have I found grace in thine eyes?" You can't help but fall on your face in humility to the ground with all these blessing. Proud people don't say thanks. Humble people are made even more humble by being treated graciously. She was amazed.

Moab was the son of an incestuous relationship between Lot (who was drunk) and his oldest daughter. And as a nation the Moabites were Israel's enemy, having opposed Israel when she came out of Egypt.

So why was Boaz so kind? Well, in the natural it was probably because he was by her beauty and workmanship, but what about the spiritual? Have you come to the point in your Christian life where you just have to stop and shake your head in disbelief at the grace of God? (*You've seen what you are like in your own nature, yet you still find yourself blessed by God*). That is why grace is so amazing. Boaz had given her free access to his field, protection from the young men, and water from the well. All she wanted to know is why me? Hallelujah! Such humility is a spiritual trait!

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. Boaz answers by saying, **It hath fully been shewed me...** What we discover is that Boaz knew all about Ruth and her commitment before she knew anything about him! He knew of her heart, and the sacrifice she had made to follow Naomi, and the Lord. She left her father and mother, and her land to come to people she didn't even know. This again pictures the Lord Jesus who already knows all that we are, even before we have begun to know Him. Ruth was someone who was dedicated, and loyal without trying to draw attention to herself, as well as humble and dependent upon grace. Boaz did not dwell on where she came from, but where her faith has brought her now. We can also look at Abraham and Sarah, following after God!

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. Boaz is only an instrument of God. Boaz is saying that God is really the One who is rewarding Ruth for her love to Naomi. This verse gives us a picture of God as a great winged Eagle and Ruth as a threatened little eaglet coming to find safety under the Eagle's wings. The implication of this verse is that God will reward Ruth because she has sought refuge under His wings. She has not earned mercy from God or Boaz. She is not their employee. They are not paying her wages for her work. On the contrary, she has honored them in her response of humility, by simply taking refuge in their generosity. Wherever Ruth went or whatever she did, her character remained the same by her responding in humility (*a humble heart*) because of the grace of God. She has bowed herself before a Holy and Awesome God, who has brought her into a place of blessings.

2:13 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. Back in verse 10, she had asked Boaz "**why have I found favor?**" Boaz lets her know why. She is now saying to him after hearing what he said, she wants the favor to continue. She forgot all about her

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fears and rested on what he had said. Why? **First** because Boaz had **comforted her** with his words, and **second** Boaz had **spoken in a friendly manner** (*meaning, spoken to the heart*), even though she was **not one of the Hebrew handmaidens** but a foreigner. If someone does speak kindly and shows kindness to you, it would be from the heart, then you would really feel and know that you could trust them; you can rely on them. Boaz met her right where she was—someone who was in need. And that's how God meets us! Favor came by God's unmerited grace.

2:14 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. ¹⁰Boaz showed great kindness and favor to Ruth at **mealtime**. It would be enough to have just invited her, but he also invited her to share fully in the meal, even the privileged dipping (*common custom in the East*); sitting among the workers; and Boaz serves some fresh roasted corn to Ruth. This meant that he **reached** in and got it for her lest she was too modest to get it for herself. **She had eaten until she was filled and left.**

2:15 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:— Not only had she been impressed with him, but he was now impressed with her! Therefore **Boaz commanded his young men** (servants) to **let her glean even among the sheaves**, meaning that she could now harvest the unpicked crop for herself. She had first chance at the best of the gleanings. With such care, she had no need to worry. She was **not to be reproached**.

Sheaves ~ some plants of wheat or barley tied together. The stalks of grain gathered and tied into a bundle after harvesting. The reapers either gathered the cut grain into sheaves themselves or left it to be collected. The sheaves were then gathered into stacks and loaded into carts.

2:16 And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not. The Law gave the gleaners the right to leave **handfuls left on purpose**, meaning they were to literally drop handfuls of grain for others to glean. This is what Boaz told the young men to do for Ruth, and **not rebuke her**. Thus the kinsman's provision was more than adequate. Ruth had no idea that Boaz had commanded his workers to be so generous to her. She meets the one man who can change her future and her fate. Not only is the encounter of their meeting a pleasant one, but she immediately becomes the object of his special grace. What a beautiful picture of the love of Christ and His provision for His bride!

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. It was a long day and a primitive method of threshing. The poor still beat out the grains of barley or wheat at the close of the day by using sticks or stones. Ruth **beat out** (*threshed*) at the end of the day and had about **an ephah of barley**. An ephah was 1 bushel and 3 pints.

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. The average receipt of a gleaner was only enough to support a family for one day, and therefore the process had to be repeated constantly. However, Ruth returned home with an ephah of barley which would have been enough to support them for about five days. A bushel of barley was rather heavy for a young woman to carry into the city—about 60 pounds (*Every Commentator had a different amount for an*

¹⁰http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7551&commInfo=31&topic=Ruth&ar=Rth_2_13
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

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ephah; all we know is that it was a lot and it was heavy). Ruth was not only a diligent worker, but she was also careful not to waste anything God had given her. Naomi (the Jew) is now getting her blessings from Ruth (the Gentile). You might look at Ruth as the weaker vessel, a poor foreigner, a widow, bankrupt and poor, however, she accepted the King of all kings, the God of Israel, the Master and Ruler who spread favor upon the least likely. Look at what God can do! God sent the right blesser to provide the encouragement Ruth needed. She now knows that where she was, she don't have to stay there. She can now move from being poor, to somebody that has the power to get up; somebody that has confidence and self-esteem backing her up. We can't make it on our own! Ruth had the grace of God through Boaz. We have the grace of God through Jesus Christ!

SUMMARY:

¹¹Boaz approaches Ruth and shows her great kindness, even though she is a foreigner. He provides food by allowing her to work in his field and stay close behind his maidens. He provides protection by telling the young men not to touch her. And he provides for her thirst by telling her to drink from what the men have drawn in their vessels. He only asks her to stay in this field, Go not to glean in another field (**2:8-9**).

Ruth raises a question which turns out to be very profound. It's one that we all need to ask God: "**Why have I found favor in your eyes?**" - Because as a non-Israelite she does not expect any special treatment. Her response to Boaz's kindness is astonishment. Ruth expresses her sense of unworthiness by falling on her face and bowing to the ground. He answers Why by saying, "*Because you have loved Naomi so much that you were willing to leave father and mother to serve her in a strange land.*" What Boaz is really saying is that, God is really the one who is rewarding Ruth for her love to Naomi. And Ruth now says Let this favor continue my lord because Boaz had comforted her, and spoken kindly to her as if he would to one of his handmaidens (**2:10-13**).

Boaz invited Ruth at mealtime where bread was dipped, parched corn was eaten, and she was filled. After the meal was finished, she got up to glean and Boaz commanded his young men to let her glean among the sheaves and provide handfuls of grain to purposely be left for her, and don't reprimand her (**2:14-16**).

It was a long day and a primitive method of threshing. Ruth gleaned until evening and beat the gain out at the end of the day—about an ephah which was 1 bushel and 3 pints. She returned home and showed it to her mother-in-law and gave it to her—a tremendous blessing (**2:17-18**).

APPLICATION:

When you give of yourself to another individual and they are helped, you are teaching them to give of themselves to someone else. God empowers us to do and give what we can. We just have to depend upon Him! God will always place someone in our path for us to help!

Have you accepted Christ in your life yet? Will you accept Him today? That will be the first step in gaining a relationship with God in your life. Then God will have a chance to take care of every need in your life. Saying "Yes" to God, changes our destiny. Salvation is only in Christ Jesus! Be the woman or man of excellence God is looking for. For God will allow others to see and call you "*Blessed.*" **TOP**

¹¹ <http://www.desiringgod.org/resource-library/sermons/ruth-under-the-wings-of-god>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>

RUTH 3:9-11

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[NEXT 4:1-22](#)

INTRODUCTION:

There are some strategic moves which lead to this part of the story. Naomi takes the initiative to find a husband for Ruth (Read 3:1-4).

Spread Your Covering

Following the instructions of her mother-in-law, Ruth went to the threshing floor* where Boaz had fallen asleep.

NOTE:

*The threshing floors were located on a hill; this one outside the city. The threshing floor is where all of the chaff was beaten out of the grain and was blown away by the night wind. That is the reason they did their threshing at night and not in the day.

She turned back the blanket at his feet and lay down. This was how a widow claimed her right to a "Levirate"** Marriage. Now we should not interpret this as any sort of immoral or even sexual situation.

NOTE:

**Dying without a son to continue both his name and his life was considered by the Hebrews a particularly terrible tragedy. Because the inheritance of the land of Israel was tied to the family, it was necessary for a widow to marry within the family. Thus the kinsman would need both the resources and the desire to support a new wife. It seems from reading Deuteronomy 25 that it was actually the widow's duty to instigate the proceeding, not the kinsman, and the marriage not only gave her the opportunity to have children but it also meant food, clothing and shelter that might otherwise have been hard to find. What Ruth is doing is proper in the eyes of God and His Law.

The widow first had to claim her right to what was called a "Levirate Marriage." There was, of course, an order of precedence with the oldest brother of the deceased first in line. If he refused then the second brother could accept. Then comes the opportunity of other male relatives in their turn. A cousin could inherit the deceased's property only by marrying the widow and offering her a chance to produce a son with genes as close as possible to those of her husband. As she made the decision to marry, she then had to accept the first man on the list who said yes. When a son was born to this union, it would not be counted as the son of the surviving brother, but as, son to the deceased brother. If the brothers of the deceased man refused to take this responsibility, they were to be called to open shame by the widow, as she declares he will not perform the duty of the husband's brother. The shame was compounded as they would remove his sandal and the widow would spit in his face.

POINT:

There are two laws that come into play in the Book of Ruth, the law of the Kinsman Redeemer (Lev. 25:25)—when a relative went into debt, it was the obligation of the nearest kinsman to help out, to buy the farm and keep the property in the family.

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And where Ruth takes the initiative by claiming the right of the "Levirate" marriage and Boaz invokes the Levirate Law (Deut.25:5-10), requiring the near kinsman not only to buy the land, but take Ruth to be his wife and raise up an inheritance for Elimelech.

3:9 And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore the skirt over thine handmaid: for thou art a near kinsman. When Boaz woke up and realized there was a woman lying at his feet, he was surprised, and asked who she was. Did you notice where it was that Ruth finally lodged? She lodged at the feet of Boaz. She said v.9 ..."*I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering (skirt) over your maid, for you are a close relative.*" She asked him to spread his covering over her. There is no sex going on. She lay at his feet. What does this mean? The uncovering of, and lying at, his feet indicates not forwardness, but humility. The word for "skirt" is the Hebrew word for "wing." Literally, she said, "*Spread your wings over your maid.*" This was the same expression that Boaz had used when he spoke to her back in Chapter 2:12 "*May the Lord reward your work, and your wages be full from the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge.*" Boaz had said, "*You have taken refuge under God's wings.*" Now Ruth is saying, "*Spread your wings over me and give me refuge.*" Or literally, "*You are the redeemer: the one who can redeem our inheritance and our family name from being lost. I want you to fill that role for me. I want to be your wife.*" She doesn't say it outright. Ruth was making a proposal to him for marriage.

A Woman Of Excellence

3:10 And he said, Blessed be thou of the Lord, my daughter: for thou hast showed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. Boaz was a lot older than Ruth - probably old enough to be a father or uncle to her. He thought she was being very kind in choosing him. Boaz praised Ruth's devotion to Naomi. He was grateful for her kindness. The kindness at the beginning was:

- Leaving her homeland and coming to live with and care for Naomi. Her complete and total surrender to her mother-in-law, Naomi, was not a fluctuating thing. It was a continuous thing until it reached the point of total surrender because she was willing to have Boaz as her husband.

The kindness at the end is:

She showed more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in...

- That she did not just go after any young man whether poor or rich. She gave up the chance to marry a younger man so that Naomi would be cared for. She chose Boaz.

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 knew Ruth was an exceptional woman who had gained a good reputation in Bethlehem—and she wasn't even Jewish. Her presence and godly character served as an example to God's people of what He expected from them. Ruth had the reputation in town as being excellent, and virtuous, although she was a Moabite. Boaz had no reservations about marrying her. Notice that he was willing to do whatever she asked. Boaz was an unselfish man. He had much to lose by honoring Ruth's proposal, especially since their first child would be Naomi's heir, not his according to the "Levirate Law."

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However, Ruth's reputation in the city was one of a woman of excellence. His description of her is "excellent," or "virtuous," as the King James Version renders it, and agreed to act on her behalf. Boaz was honored to have the interest of a young woman, but he would not marry her for her beauty or youth. He returned interest in her because of her godly qualities.

SUMMARY:

We can't gain acceptance by doing things in our own way or old way. **Going to God in prayer** is the first step and **patience and time** is the second step. God can move fast or He can move slowly, that is, according to our timing. However, it's **HIs timing** which is outside of our timing in getting others ready for us. Waiting on God is a time of testing. Waiting on God assumes that God is working.

For ten years God was working. He had been getting Naomi ready to go back to Bethlehem-Judah. In that process of time, He had gotten Ruth ready to go back with Naomi and she accepts Him as her God. And here we are, seeing that Boaz is ready for a wife. A wife coming from a foreign country and she's accepted his God—Yahweh! Boaz says,

^{3:10} ...*Blessed be you of the Lord, my daughter. For you have made this last loving-kindness greater than the former, for you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.*

¹¹*And now, my daughter, fear not. I will do for you all you require, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of strength (worth, bravery, capability) (AMP).*

He blesses her and lets her know he's ready, and so are the towns' people ready to accept her. Nobody but God can do that! She gained acceptance when she accepted God first and then she accepted God's people! Her latter was truly better than the former.

^{1:16}*And Ruth said, Urge me not to leave you or to turn back from following you; for where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people and your God my God.*

¹⁷*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 me from you (AMP).*

APPLICATION:

Have you accepted Christ in your life yet? Will you accept Him today? That will be the first step in gaining a relationship with God in your life. Then God will have a chance to take care of every need in your life. Saying "Yes" to God, changes our destiny. Salvation is only in Christ Jesus! Be the woman or man of excellence God is looking for. For God will allow others to see and call you "*Blessed*."

[TOP](#)

INTRODUCTION:

In Ruth **Chapter 3**, Naomi and Ruth make a risky move in the middle of the night. Naomi gives Ruth instructions as to what to do. Ruth goes to Boaz on the threshing floor and says in effect, "*I want you to spread your wing over me as my husband.*" Instead of this resolving into a beautiful love story, there in the midst of the circumstances of Ruth's widowhood seems to be another man who according to Hebrew custom has prior claim of kinsman-redeemer to marry Ruth. The impeccably honest Boaz will not proceed without giving this man his lawful opportunity. So chapter 3 ends again in the suspense of another setback.

4:1 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. After the midnight rendezvous in **Chapter 3**, **Chapter 4:1** begins with Boaz getting up early in the morning and **going to the city gate** of Bethlehem where the official business was done. In ancient Palestinian cities there was usually no large open courtyard or plaza. Therefore, the gate area, which was similar to a shaded tunnel served as a common meeting place; a place for legal transactions. Boaz knew where to find his relative. And the "hearer" **kinsman comes by**, and Boaz called out to him and they **sit down together**. **The Law of the kinsman-redeemer** is given in Leviticus 25:23-34, and the Law governing **Levirate Marriage** is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. The purposes of these laws were to preserve the name and protect the property of families in Israel. When obeyed, these laws made sure that a dead man's family name did not die with him and that his property was not sold outside the tribe or clan.

4:2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. Boaz's intimate knowledge of affairs of the town of Bethlehem was indicated as **he took ten men of the elders of the city** to serve as official witnesses to the transaction which he was about to propose. The number "ten" was significant to the Jews as a quorum necessary for a synagogue gathering and for the marriage benediction. From the most ancient times it represented an official gathering of those in authority. They gathered together and sat down.

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:— Boaz cleverly presented his case to the relative. First, he brought in information not yet mentioned in the story. **Boaz begins:** Elimelech, Naomi's former husband still had some property in the area; a share of the common field, and Boaz proceeded to tell the kinsman that **Naomi selleth a parcel of land**. Naomi is giving up what little property she has, and the duty of the "hearer" kinsman is to buy it so that the inheritance stays in the family.

4:4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my

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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 proceeded to indicate that it was his desire to advertise ("uncover thy ear", RSV) meaning that he wanted to know the intention of the other kinsman. Since the 'hearer' kinsman was in the line of succession, Boaz was required to give him the first right of obligation (*gō' ēl*) to redeem. To our dismay the kinsman says, I will redeem it, indicating that his intention was to pay the price for the family possession. So, Boaz doesn't want him to redeem it, he wants to redeem it. So, again there seems to be a setback. And the irony of this setback is that it is being caused by honesty. The kinsman is only doing his duty.

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 says to the 'hearer' kinsman, "You know, don't you, that Naomi has a daughter-in-law. So when you do the part of the kinsman redeemer, you must also take her as your wife and raise up offspring in the name of her husband Mahlon?" This is a package deal! You see the kinsman would never actually own the land itself, but would actually hold it in trust for the son of Ruth **In order to raise up the name of the dead**. Wow!¹² Because of Boaz's wise (perhaps shrewd) way of framing the occasion, this was the first time the 'hearer' kinsman considered this, and it was a pretty big question to take in all at once. When it was just a matter of property, it was easy to decide on; but if he must take Ruth as a wife, that was another matter.

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. Alright, this is a great relief. The kinsman says he can't do it; **he can't redeem it**. These were glorious words in the ears of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. He seemed willing to redeem Naomi's property if it didn't hurt him personally, or if he might possibly gain from it. But he would not accept the responsibility if it happened as a final result in a reduction of his own resources, and a consequent unfairness of his own heir by marrying Ruth. So now he gives Boaz legal right of redemption.

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. The business is settled as Israel did in former times concerning redeeming and concerning changing: When land was sold, the one previously owning the land would give his shoe to the one who had bought it, signifying that he freely gave up his right to walk upon the soil in favor of the person who had acquired the possession. The one declining removed a sandal and the woman he declined to honor spat in his face. But in this case, because there was no dishonor involved, they just did part of the ceremony involving the sandal.

4:8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. They concluded such a transaction publicly by relinquishing; taking off a sandal. **This was to confirm all things**, and this sealed it. There was no going back. Boaz was to buy it back and the 'hearer' kinsman took off his shoe.

4:9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have

¹² http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7553&commInfo=31&topic=Ruth&ar=Rth_4_5
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bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi. This is saying that, Boaz will buy the property from the land of Naomi—he is purchasing all that belonged to Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon with the intention of marrying Ruth and raising up her first born under the name of the deceased, so that his name retains an eternal inheritance that even death cannot remove.

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. Boaz further clarified his intentions by announcing Ruth to be his intended wife. He announced two things:

1. The reference of "purchase": **have I purchased to be my wife** gives the concept of redeeming.
¹³This explains why a marriage ceremony is important, and why it should be recognized by the civil authorities. Boaz had a love for Ruth that was public, a love that wanted to be publicly witnessed and registered.
2. He further announced that he was willing to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. This meant that he was willing to carry on the line of Elimelech and Mahlon which had been temporarily cut off by their deaths.

Therefore, by Boaz purchasing Ruth to be his wife, their son would be considered the fulfillment of their seed and would guarantee their continued inheritance remaining in Israel. This way **the name of the dead would not be cut off from among his brethren or from the gate of his place.** All the people around them were his witnesses that day!

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:— All the people around them were **his witnesses that day!** And they replied to that fact. When they say that Jehovah will make the woman (Ruth) like Rachel and like Leah—these two women, and their handmaids, were the mothers of all of Israel. They had twelve children between them, who made up the twelve tribes of Israel. That was a very powerful blessing placed upon her.

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. Of all the ancestor they could have named, why did the people mention Perez? Tamar who bore Pharez (Perez) to Judah-- Perez was born from a Levirate marriage.^{*} Judah was actually the only semi-willing husband to Tamar. However, when found to be in error for his promises which were not fulfilled, Judah both married and raised up a child by Tamar—actually twins—one of whom was among the ancestors of Boaz. This indicates that the family of Perez is one of the larger and more prosperous families to come from Judah. Thus we have the mention of Perez. To be sure, this "House" was blessed far more than the house of Pharez could ever be blessed, and in fact, every other house, for it would be the "*House of the Lord Jesus Christ.*"

NOTE:

*The birth was an example of the "levirate" practice, whereby the brother or relative of the dead

¹³ http://www.blueletterbible.org/commentaries/comm_view.cfm?AuthorID=2&contentID=7553&commInfo=31&topic=Ruth&ar=Rth_4_5
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husband married his widow (Gen. 38). Boaz as kinsman redeemer was following this levirate practice since Ruth's former husband had no brothers. The descendants of Judah made Perez the prominent tribe. Boaz, David, and all the Judean kings were descendants of Perez.

SYNOPSIS:

4:13-15 The Proposition: According to the Law of the Kinsman Redeemer, Boaz did it all by the book. Everything Jesus did, He did by the book! He fulfilled all the Law and paid the price for sin and He did it legally! The Purchase: A reason Boaz wanted to marry Ruth was to bring life out of death. Without a Kinsman-Redeemer, the family of Elimelech would die out. That family would perish from Israel. Boaz cared about that family and wanted to preserve life! Boaz was willing to pay any price because of his love for Ruth. Jesus and the great price He paid to redeem the souls of fallen men show His great love for us.

Most Jews would not even consider marrying a gentile woman. The father of Boaz was a Jew (Salmon), his mother was Rahab, the gentile prostitute. Since his mother was a gentile and a believer in Jehovah-Elohim, Boaz would have no problem marrying a gentile woman who was also a believer. "Boaz then marries Ruth and they have a son, Obed¹⁴, who sires Jesse, who is the father of David." *"So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son"* **4:13**. What Jehovah gave to Ruth is found only in **Ruth 4:13** and **Hosea 9:11**, and it means conception, pregnancy, impregnation. This son firmly fixed Ruth's place in Israel! You see, her redemption gave her legal standing in the courthouse records, but this child gave her a connection with the royal family! Obed was King David's grandfather! This made Ruth, David's great-grandmother! But, better than that, she is named in **Matt.1:5** as one of the ancestress of Jesus Christ! They were separated by race, social status, morals, etc. Now, they are one flesh!

The women of Bethlehem (**4:14**) were expressing their desire that they began to bless the Lord for His kindness. The blessing indicated that Naomi would be the benefactor throughout the life of this child. "*He shall be unto thee (Naomi) a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age*" (**4:15**). From a dispensational viewpoint, we can see how this will come true through the child JESUS, Who was born hundreds of years later. He shall be a restorer of life and a nourisher to the Jewish people in their old age. This will take place in the millennium.

With the birth of this lad Naomi will find new hope for life and that her spirit would be revived. God's blessings have a way of bringing about revival to our spirits. Obed would be Naomi's hope for life because through the seed of Obed Naomi would be assured that Elimelech's line would not become extinct.

Ruth's kindness was known and recognized* throughout the city. God brought great blessings out of Naomi's tragedy, even greater blessings than "seven sons" (indicating the great blessing of an abundance of heirs). The announcement at his naming: It was not said, "*A son has been born to Ruth,*" but "*a son has been born to Naomi.*" Why? - Because now her inheritance will continue throughout the ages. If there had been no son, her death would have marked the end of the family. But now Obed

¹⁴ This is a name that means "**Worshiping**", derived from the Hebrew word 'ebed, meaning servant.

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will carry on the family tree and maintain the family inheritance.

NOTE:

*THE GIFT OF RUTH

First, when Naomi's whole life seemed to cave in while in Moab, it was God who gave Ruth to Naomi. We know this from two verses. In **1:16** we learn that at the root of Ruth's commitment to Naomi is Ruth's commitment to Naomi's God: "Your God shall be my God." God had won Ruth's allegiance in Moab and so it was to God that Naomi owed the amazing love of her daughter-in-law. Also in **2:12** it says that when Ruth came to Judah with Naomi, she was coming to take refuge under the wings of God. Therefore it is owing to God that Ruth left her home and family to follow and serve Naomi. All along it was God turning Naomi's setback into joy—even when she was oblivious to his grace.

THE PRESERVATION OF BOAZ

Second, Naomi gives the impression in chapter 1 that there is no hope that Ruth could marry and raise up children to continue the family line (**1:12**). But all the while God is preserving a wealthy and godly man named Boaz to do just that. The reason we know that this was God's doing is that Naomi herself admits it in **2:20**. She recognizes that behind the "accidental" meeting of Ruth and Boaz was the "kindness of God who has not forsaken the living or the dead." In every loss that the godly endure, God is already plotting for their gain.

4:16-17 But notice how the focus in verses 14–17 is not on Ruth at all, nor on Boaz. The focus is on Naomi and the child. Why? Because the point of the book is that the life of the godly is not a straight line to glory, but they do get there. The story began with Naomi's loss. It ends with Naomi's gain. It began with death and ends with birth. Naomi placed the child in her bosom, which describes an action as when one embraces a loved one. She became his nurse, his nanny. The verb meaning to be firm and thus in this context conveys the idea of providing stability and confidence, as a baby would find in the arms of a parent. It does not refer to her actually feeding the child, which would have been an impossibility at her age. It is also possible that this process was symbolic of an adoption since the neighbors named the child, rather than the father, and proclaimed: "There is a son born to Naomi." The blessing of the child to each member of the family makes it clear that, Boaz has a son, Ruth, the widow is now the wife and mother of new life, and Naomi who lost both her husband and her sons is now a grandmother.

4:18-22 The book ends with the ten-generation genealogy of the generations of Pharez. Since he was the illegitimate son of Judah and Tamar (**Gen.38**), the Law required that ten generations passed before one of his descendants could serve in the leadership of the congregation of Israel (**Deut.23:2**). It is obvious that this genealogical listing is intended to confirm that at least that many generations had passed by the tie of David. Pharez was the son of Judah; Amminadab was the father-in-law of Aaron; Nahshon was his son and served as the head of the house of Judah at the time of the Exodus; Salmon is a form of Salma and occurs in **1 Chron.2:51** "...as the father of Bethlehem..." It is interesting to note that Mahlon is not mentioned at all in the genealogy and is replaced by Boaz. Obed

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is succeeded by Jesse and his son David, with no other reference to David's brothers. Obed would be the grandfather of King David, which puts them in the Davidic line. While the genealogy may be somewhat compressed, since it covers a period of many hundreds of years, it is, nevertheless, obviously intended as an important part of the book.

SUMMARY:

There have been setbacks after setbacks in Naomi and Ruth's lives but God is about to bring this to fruition. There are three parties now involved: Boaz, Ruth, and the kinsman-redeemer. Boaz is going before the ten elders of the community as the rest of the community watches and witnesses. Boaz cared about Ruth as well as the community standards, and did what was acceptable in their laws. He did not disrespect what was set in place as a kinsman-redeemer. He wanted to marry Ruth but there was another kinsman-redeemer standing in the way. He used such strategy! **First** of all, he was friendly with the kinsman in their first encounter and asked him to sit down. **Secondly**, the city gate was a good place to do business. Therefore, calling community court of the elders also brought forth all to witness this transaction of land purchase, and redemption in their community. **Thirdly**, he puts before this kinsman the land that Naomi has to sell which was Elimelech's; if he wanted to use his right of redemption, he says then buy it, if not, tell him and all those around him how things stand because the only ones in the picture to redeem it was the kinsman and Boaz. Well, he says he wants to redeem it! Well, here comes the catcher the kinsman didn't realize (**4:1-5**).

Fourth, Boaz lets him know that the day he buys it, he also is buying it from Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the one who died to restore his name to his inheritance. That means he would have to marry her. The kinsman then has a change of heart; he now cannot redeem it. Do you see this strategy working? By bringing the kinsman before the elders, he couldn't say Boaz tricked him; he couldn't say that all was not told to him. Do you see you can't put the "*cart before the horse?*" He didn't let the kinsman see what the horse was pulling. Therefore, he strategically showed him the land first. If he had known all from the beginning, it probably wouldn't have been a smooth transaction. The kinsman really thought it was just a land transaction, now he learns the land would not just belong to him, but to Elimelech's family. The kinsman did not love Ruth as Boaz did. Therefore, this way, it let the kinsman down easy by bringing in the facts slowly because Boaz was not trying to shame him. It would be shameful if he didn't want to preserve his brother's name by marrying the widow. Caring for someone means always doing the right thing no matter how it does not go in your favor and not wanting to shame another even when you're right! Be willing to let go and let God! In this story love conquered all because God **was** in the midst! The kinsman tells Boaz to buy it and then pulls off his sandal, which sealed the deal of their business transaction—that he has relinquished his right of redemption; he would not preserve his brother's name. It's always good to have a witness for some business transactions especially when you think the other person won't live up to it. *Matthew 10:16b "... be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves."* Now Boaz is allowed to make his important announcement before all the witnesses—his declaration to marry Ruth and to revive the name of the deceased for the inheritance—Elimelech's name will live on when she has a son with Boaz! (**4:6-10**).

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All the people around them were his witnesses that day! And they replied to that fact. The people says, "May the Lord make this woman...as fertile as Rachel and Leah...and even be numerous and honorable as those of their ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar, the son of Tamar and Judah" (4:11-12). Ruth and Boaz were married and gave birth to a baby boy (4:13).¹⁵ The women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, Who has not left you this day without a close kinsman, and may his name be famous in Israel" (4:14). They went on to say, "He will make you happy and take care of you in your old age, because he is the son of your daughter-in-law. And she loves you more than seven sons of your own would love you" (4:15). Naomi helped Ruth to care for him (4:16). He would become the father to Jesse and the grandfather of David. So Ruth was the great-grandmother of David. God was good to them! The women and neighbors gave the name Obed; he is the father of Jesse, and Jesse is the father of David (4:17). Obed means "Worshiper." And then is the genealogy of the generations (4:18-22) (4:11-22).

APPLICATION:

Our character is always under a magnifying glass. Ask God to help you to not be the magnifier but the one who cares and respects the other. Life may not always be fair, but you will always be the victor in God's eyes.

Everything we do in obedience to God, no matter how small, is significant. Just as Ruth was unaware of this larger purpose in her life, we will never know the full purpose and importance of our lives until we are able to look back on the whole picture from the perspective of eternity. We must make our choices with God's eternal values in mind. Because of Ruth's faithful obedience, her life and legacy carried great significance even though she couldn't see the end result. Live in faithfulness to God, knowing that the significance will extend beyond your lifetime!

[TOP](#)

¹⁵ <http://www.family-times.net/commentary/ruth-413/>
<http://www.pitwm.net/pitwm-versebyverse.html>