

## Ruth Ch 4

Well, the curtain comes up in this final scene in the book of Ruth and this is where it all comes together for this Moabite woman and her mother in law Naomi. Act 1 (so to speak) took place in the land of Moab, Scene 2 in the fields of Boaz in Bethlehem, Scene 3 is at the threshing floor of Boaz, and here the drama unfolds at the city gates of Bethlehem. You recall that in ch 3 Ruth had approached Boaz and requested of him that he would invoke the law of the kinsman redeemer. And we mentioned what this law was and basically it stated that if a man married a woman and he died before raising up son to carry on his name, that the next nearest of kin (be it a brother or a cousin or whatever) would have the responsibility to take you as a wife and the 1<sup>st</sup> born son would be considered the son of the deceased husband so that his name wouldn't be blotted out.

Now by law she could've demanded it, or forced it, you may remember the story of Judah and Tamar, Judah had 3 sons and the oldest boy's name was Er, and he got married to this woman by the name of Tamar. But the bible tells us that he was wicked in the sight of the Lord and so the Lord killed him (just took him out). So Judah gave her his next son, but the next son didn't want his brothers name to be carried on (for whatever reason, maybe he used to beat him up all the time when they were little or something and he held a grudge). But because of that when he went into her, he didn't perform the duty that was his, he just emitted on the ground (the bible tells us) and so since he was unwilling to do the lawful thing, we read that the Lord killed him to. Well, Judah only had 3 sons, and so far there were 2 strikes against him and so he told Tamar, hey, why don't you just go ahead and remain a widow, my 3<sup>rd</sup> boy is still a bit young to get married. But the fact is, he didn't want all of his boys to die, for whatever reason this gal seemed to be bad news, some sort of black widow or something. 2 of my boys have died at your side and you're not getting the 3<sup>rd</sup>, so the years went by and eventually Judah's wife died. Well, he needed to head off to the city to take care of some business and it was told to Tamar what he was doing and she (knowing that Judah's 3<sup>rd</sup> boy was plenty old enough to marry but that he had no intention of giving him to her), took off her widow's garments and dressed up like a prostitute. So when Judah saw her, he didn't know it was his daughter in law because she had a veil covering her face. And so he propositioned her and she said, "Well, what will you give me?" And he said, "How about a young goat?" And she said, "That's fine but you don't have any goats with you, so what kind of a pledge will you give me that you'll fulfill your word?" He said, "What do you want?" She said, "Your staff and your signet ring" (now you know where the act of giving a ring as a pledge to fulfill your vows to your wife came from). So he says, "fine". And he gives them to her and goes into her and she conceives, well Judah when he gets back home tells his servant to go that direction and find the prostitute and give her this young goat. So he takes off and when he comes to this place he says, "Where's the prostitute that hangs out here?" And the men say, "We don't know what you're talking about, there's no prostitute around here." So he goes back and tells Judah, "There wasn't a prostitute to be found around there."

And so Judah just says, “Fine, let her have those thing, don’t make a big deal of it or else I’ll become shamed.” In other words don’t tell anyone my business it’s embarrassing enough as it is. Well, a few months go by and word comes to Judah that his daughter in law Tamar is pregnant. And so he says, bring her out here and let her be burned.

And so when they brought her out, she sent the ring and staff to Judah and said, “Would you please examine these, because by the man who owns them I’m pregnant.” And so when he saw them, he knew what had went down and he said, “She’s been more righteous then I, because I didn’t give her my son.” In other words, I didn’t follow through with the commands of the law and so she took it upon herself to “force” the law into action.

And Ruth could’ve demanded Boaz to perform this duty, because it was the right thing to do, but she didn’t. She didn’t take matters into her own hands, she sought the Lord of the harvest for redemption and then she trusted the Lord to take care of the rest.

And just like with Boaz the Lord is eager and willing to redeem the one who will come to Him. Now you recall that Boaz sent her to Naomi with 6 ephahs (or more probable) 6 handfuls of grain. And there are those who see sort of a secret code in this act as it relates to this number 6. Because you remember that God created the heavens and the earth in 6 days and He didn’t rest until the 7<sup>th</sup>. And some people believe that when someone would do something like this that the message they were sending the recipient is that they had work to do and that they were going to rest until it was complete. And if that were the case it would seem as though Naomi got the message because notice her response in vs 18 of ch 3 (read).

And the message for you and me here is that she requested redemption of the Lord of the harvest and now she was to rest and let Him do that work. And once we’ve made any *request* of the Lord, we need to be careful to leave the *work* with Him and just sit still and see how it will turn out. Now generally we get all anxious and seek to take matters into our own hands and that always makes a mess of things, but the bible tells us to cast our cares upon Him, because He cares for us. And if He cares for you then why do you concern yourself with the matters that pertain to you that you’ve involved Him in and asked Him to take care of it for you? Now if it turns out so that it seems to you to be in your favor, praise the Lord. If not we trust God’s Word to us in Rom 8:28, “*And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.*” and If that means we have to wait until we get to the other side to see how that worked in our best interest then so be it, but regardless of how it turns out, once we’ve commended something over into the Lord’s hands we need to be careful to leave it there. So how will this matter turn out for Ruth?

Vs1-2

Court is now in session, as many of you know, in ancient Israel it was at the gates of the city that the elders of the city sat and where they would take care of official business and legal matters. So if you had something you needed to settle before the elders, the city gates is where you’d go.

Well, Boaz has something he needed to tend to and so to the gates he went. And again notice the providential sovereignty of God; you remember when Ruth went out to glean in the fields that she “just happened” to come upon the fields of Boaz. Well, interestingly enough as Boaz commits to the direction that he believes the Lord would have him take and goes to the city gates, who should happen to walk by accept the relative he was referring to who was a nearer relative than him. God’s just causing the peaces to fall together, opening the door of redemption for Ruth through Boaz.

#### Vs3-4

Now truly redemption is the theme of this ch, words like “redeem” “redemption” “buy” and “bought” are used no less than 14 times in this ch alone. The word, “redeem” means to set free by paying a price. Now in this case it’s a matter of physical redemption, paying a price for some land in order that it might be released from the contract of ownership that someone else had on it.

And when Elimelech died the rights to the land would’ve passed to Ruth’s husband but since he’s dead as well, the right to redeem the land will fall to the next nearest of kin and then the next and so on, but because the right fell to Ruth’s husband but he died, that explains how Ruth is a part of the deal. But with spiritual redemption, we were all in bondage to sin, we were all enslaved by the enemy, and none of us had the ability to redeem ourselves. And so the Lord of the harvest, Jesus Christ paid the redemption price on our behalf. But you weren’t redeemed with corruptible things like silver or gold from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers (Peter said) “*but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.*” And it’s faith in Him that sets we as captives free, but here we read where the property that had belonged to Elimelech had been sold and so Boaz says, “Hey, we need to do the right thing here, so if you’re willing to redeem the land, that’s fine, but if not, let me know and I’ll take care of it.” And so the nearer kinsman says, “That sounds good to me, I’ll take the land.” And at that word Boaz’s heart probably sunk to his socks, he loved Ruth and didn’t want to lose her, but he hasn’t even brought her up yet. But since this seems to be maybe going in a direction that’s not favoring him, he’s going to pull out all the stops and reveal his full hand. He’s got one last ace up his sleeve so to speak and he’s pulling it out now.

#### Vs5-6

So this guy says, “Hey, this sounds great I’ll buy the land.” And then it’s as though Boaz went, “Oh, yeah, there’s 1 more little detail that I forgot to mention, when you buy the land, there’s a little Moabite woman that comes with it and you’ll need to fulfill the duty of raising up a son through her for her deceased husband as well.” And it’s like the other guy goes, “Oh, why didn’t you tell me that in the 1<sup>st</sup> place, I can’t redeem the land, it’ll mess up my own kids inheritance.” You see Naomi was passed the age of childbearing so there would be no expectations on that end, but with Ruth it would be a whole different story and if he had a son with her, then that would mess everything up because now he’s got to factor all that in with the children he already has with his present wife. Not to mention the fact that it probably wouldn’t have flown over to well at home.

Can't you just see this man coming home from work that night? "How was work today honey?" "Oh it was fine" "Anything exciting happen?" "Well, (through a cough or something) I married this little (gentile) Moabite gal... but other than that it was business as usual." So this guy says listen, I can't do that, you redeem it yourself. Now Boaz is feeling pretty good about the turn of events, and for what it's worth some commentators see this nearer kinsman as a type of the law, in that it was in place 1<sup>st</sup> but it was unable to redeem us (so you can do with that what you like).

#### Vs7-10

Now this is one detail that in the times I've read over this book I've never taken notice of because last time I told you I didn't know which of Naomi's 2 sons Ruth was married to. And here it tells us straight out, so you see why we need to read and read and read God's Word, because it's so easy to over look things at times.

But there's a couple of things I want to draw to your attention here in this vs because back in ch 1 when Ruth abandoned her accustomed way of life and forsook Moab in order to seek after and trust in the God of Israel and tend to her mother in law, it seemed as if she gave up all chances to ever get married. I mean here was this gentile woman coming into Jewish land and on top of it she was a Moabite, whom they weren't to let into their lineage up to the tenth generation, but notice how God honored her commitment to Him, and trust in Him. As she put Him 1<sup>st</sup> He brought her into such a sweet marital relationship that it went well beyond anything she could've imagined. And today there are a lot of people looking for a spouse, there are single people that are both young and those that aren't as young even in this fellowship that are just longing for someone to share their lives with, and I'm telling you that if you put God 1<sup>st</sup>, and place your trust in Him, He'll bless your life in the same way. He'll bring that right person into your life that will cause your union to be a blessed union and not a stressful bondage like union.

And notice Boaz's statement, "You are witnesses this day:" In other words this was his marriage ceremony and it took place before witnesses, and this is why it's so important to go through the legal rites and why a marriage should be recognized by civil authorities. Boaz had a love for Ruth that he wanted to be publicly witnessed and registered.

Sometimes, people wonder why a marriage *ceremony* or a marriage *license* is so important. And they say things like, "Can't we just be married before God?" But listen, there's something severely lacking in a love that doesn't want to proclaim itself; a love that doesn't want witnesses; and doesn't want the bond to be recognized by the civil authorities. And they'll say, "Well as far as God is concerned we are married." No, as far as God is concerned you're committing fornication in pre-marital relations, you remember when Jesus was speaking to the woman at the well and he said to her, "Go and get your husband." And she said, "Well, I'm not married," and He said, "*You have well said, 'I have no husband,' 'for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.'*"

In other words God doesn't recognize live in boyfriends as a husband and wife relationship no matter what kind of verbiage you attach to it. If it's not recognized before legal authorities, then it's not a marriage and here Boaz is taking care of things legally, because he truly loves Ruth.

#### Vs11-12

Notice how in Israel children were considered a blessing and not a burden, the more children you had, the more blessed you were. Our culture seems to be just the opposite, people see children as a burden and not a blessing, but you see here where they brought up this incident concerning Judah and Tamar. When Tamar finally gave birth she had twins one of which was named Perez, and Perez would actually find himself in the lineage of Christ, he was also in the lineage of Elimelech and Boaz. And so here is a similar occasion whereby an older man fulfills the rite of the kinsman redeemer and they're pronouncing blessing upon their marriage, may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem, and both of these things would take place.

#### Vs13-15

Of course 7 sons representing the supreme blessing that could come upon a Hebrew family and Ruth has been better to Naomi than 7 sons, again just blessing this family.

#### Vs16-17

Obed means "worshiper" and he would become David's granddad who was the same David as the David and Goliath David, the David and Saul, eventually King David, David who's offspring would lead to Jesus.

#### Vs18-22

And so the curtain closes with Boaz and Ruth living happily ever after, and this chapter pictures Boaz as a wonderful type of Christ as our kinsman Redeemer in that Boaz bought the field, not because he needed the field or was really even interested in the field, but because he loved Ruth and wanted her to be his bride.

And Jesus Christ came to this earth, clothed Himself in flesh and blood that He might become a near kinsman to humanity, and He paid the purchase price in order to redeem all the earth, not because He was interested in this planet, but because He loved you and He wanted to take the church as His bride. Jesus said, "*the kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and hid; and for joy over it he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.*" You see to you and me redemption is free, but as far as God is concerned it cost Him a great deal, the field is the earth, you're the treasure, and Jesus gave all that He had in order to purchase the field that He might have the treasure that was in it. He paid the price for the whole world, out of love, in order to redeem for Himself a bride; He didn't need the field, but was willing to purchase it in order to get His bride. And even as Boaz took Ruth out of desperation, helplessness and hopelessness, and did for her what she could never do for herself, giving her as it were a future and a hope and a glorious destiny.

Jesus took you out of dire straights, out of desperation, aimlessness, emptiness, helplessness and hopelessness and did for you what you could never do for yourself and has given you a future and a hope and a destiny of eternal glory forever by His side. And as far as the stipulation of a Moabite woman not entering into the lineage of Israel to the 10<sup>th</sup> generation, we just happen to have 10 generations listed here for us. And so this prodigal daughter of the OT known as Naomi came back to Bethlehem Judah, the house of bread and the place of Praise where God rebuilt, restored, rebirthed and renewed her and that's what He'll do for us if when we fall we'll come back to Him.

The beautiful aspect of the Romance of Redemption.

Now Ruth and Boaz will fade from the scene and David will take the center stage as he points to the Son of David, Jesus Christ