



Redeemed by the Kinsman Redeemer Ruth 4

Introduction

The marriage of Ruth and Boaz is more than a beautiful love story of two fine people, though as that it is an artistic success. Symbolically, it is an example of redemption. Spiritually, it is a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ as our Kinsman Redeemer. Yet it is even more. Historically and Scripturally, it is the link between the genealogies of God's chosen people in Genesis and the monarchy to come in 1 Samuel under David and his descendants. Without the Book of Ruth the link would be missing. Ruth shows God's faithfulness to His promise to produce a ruler through Judah's line (Genesis 49:10) who would be the redeemer promised to Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:15) and spoken of with assurance by Job (19:25-26).

Outline of Ruth Chapter 4

- I. A Kinsman Redeemer - Ruth 4:1-12
- II. A Marriage and a Baby - Ruth 4:13-22

I. Boaz Redeems Ruth - Ruth 4:1-12

- A. Discussion of Redemption – Ruth 4:1-8

- 1. At the gate – 4:1

Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. The business of the city was conducted at the gate. Men gathered there daily to bring their cases for discussion and resolution. We might liken the city gate to our city hall or county courthouse.

There are many examples of transactions at the gate of a city. Abraham went to the city gate to buy a field from Ephron, the Hittite, for Sarah's burial (Genesis 23:10) See other examples in Genesis 34:20; Deuteronomy 22:15; Joshua 20:4; 2 Samuel 15:2.

- 2. Arrival of next of kin – 4:1

Behold, the close relative...came by. The writer seems startled by the swiftness of events as the very person who was most crucial to the proceedings at this point appeared in front of Boaz at the gate. God's hand was apparent. The alternative is that it was pure chance. We choose to believe one or the other. There is no point in giving glory to chance so let us ascribe glory to God when that which seems to be happenstance coincides with His will and purpose.

- 3. Ten men for a quorum – 4:2

Boaz *took ten men of the elders of the city.* Later, Judaism considered ten men the quorum required for a synagogue. Presumably, when Paul met with a few women having a prayer meeting down by the river in Philippi, it was because there were not ten Jewish men in the city to constitute a synagogue (Acts 16:13).

- 4. Boaz' presentation of Naomi's case - 4:3-6

- a. Naomi's parcel of land – verses 3-4

First, Boaz mentioned Naomi's need to sell some of the land which had belonged to her husband, Elimelech. Boaz described him as *our brother*. Leviticus 25:25 says, *If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold some of his possessions, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brethren sold.* Clearly the next of kin standing before Boaz was that person. Boaz told him to redeem it, or he, Boaz, would. *I will redeem it,* said the closer kinsman.

- b. Ruth as part of the transaction – verses 5-6

We can imagine Boaz as he leaned forward and spoke slowly and distinctly. *On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance.*

The law said, *If brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, and take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel* (Deuteronomy 25:5-6).

It further said, *If a man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders... (Deuteronomy 25:7).* Then, the elders would make sure the man had refused to do his duty, and she would pull off his sandal and spit in his face, and say, *so shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house* (Deuteronomy 25:8-9).

The closest relative, whether a brother or related in another way, refused to marry Ruth for fear of impairing his own inheritance. Earlier, in the Book of Genesis, a

brother who had accepted the privilege of going in to his brother's widow, spilled his seed on the ground. In so doing he refused to carry out the full duty to raise up a child to the dead brother. At the same time, he made a mockery of the obligation. God killed him for his arrogance. Afterwards, the man's father, who was Judah, patriarch of the line from which Messiah would come, dealt unfairly with his widowed daughter-in-law, Tamar. He refused to allow his younger son Shelah to marry her (Genesis 38:7-11). He sent her off to live in her father's house, wiping his hands of any further responsibility. Boaz, on the other hand, gratefully and joyfully accepted the privilege of the responsibility presented to him.

5. Custom of the sandal – 4:7-8

This custom was also part of the law, as we have seen. It was fortunate for the closer relative that it was Boaz and not Ruth who pulled off his sandal. Boaz did not spit in his face. Boaz was surely relieved and grateful that the closer relative had refused to marry Ruth.

B. Conclusion of the Transaction - Ruth 4:9-12

1. Boaz' call for witnesses – 4:9-10

Boaz called those present to witness the fact that on that day he had bought from Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and to his sons, Mahlon and Chilion, *that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate*. Boaz' generosity shines through the legal language.

2. Witnesses' affirmation of Boaz' action – 4:11-12

With all the formality of a legal action, the elders and all those present at the gate said they were witnesses to Boaz' deed.

3. Blessing by the witnesses – 4:11

The blessing which the witnesses bestowed had three parts.

a. Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah – 4:11

The Lord make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah the two who built up the house of Israel. The two sisters and their handmaids bore to Jacob twelve sons who would become the twelve tribes of the nation of Israel (Genesis 29:31 - 30:24; 35:18). The witnesses asked God to bless Boaz with many sons. Actually one was sufficient and he is the only one mentioned as being born to Boaz and Ruth.

b. Boaz to have prosperity in Ephrathah and renown in Bethlehem – 4:12

The town of Bethlehem lay in the region of Ephrathah. It was the town from which Naomi and her family had come (Ruth 1:1). Bethlehem figured prominently in the closing chapters of Judges. Bethlehem would be David's birthplace and the prophesied birthplace of David's Greater Son, Jesus Christ, a thousand years later (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4-7).

c. Like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah – 4:12

Perez (Pharez) was the grandson of Jacob in the line of Judah. He was the son of Tamar and Judah. Tamar had been widowed twice of Judah's two eldest sons. Her father-in-law, had dealt deceitfully with her, refusing to give her his third son, Shelah, blaming her for the deaths of the first two. (See page one of these notes under 2. b.) Tamar overcame Judah's unfair treatment by outsmarting him and claiming by faith her right to be in the covenant family of faith. Not only does the Bible not blame her for her subterfuge, but she is acclaimed with four other women in the genealogy of Jesus (Matthew 1:3).

Two of the five women mentioned among Jesus' ancestors were outsiders to Israel. Rahab was an Amorite and Ruth a Moabite. Three have some questionable deed in their background. Rahab was an innkeeper and a harlot. Tamar tricked her father-in-law into getting her pregnant. Bathsheba committed adultery with King David (although not by her choice). Ruth and Mary have nothing similar to mark their past lives. All five women came to be in the line of Christ by God's grace, through faith.

Perez had many descendants and came to be the main ancestor of the people of Bethlehem and Ephrathah.

C. Jesus, Our Kinsman Redeemer

1. Description

As stated in the previous lesson, the Hebrew word "go-el", translated "close relative" in the New King James Version is the word which refers to the kinsman redeemer. "Go-el" implies certain obligations arising out of that relationship. It was necessary for the kinsman redeemer to be related, willing, able, and have the price needed to redeem the property or person. Our Lord Jesus Christ fits the description as our God-appointed Redeemer.

2. Related

Jesus Christ took on our humanity to become our kinsman. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (John 1:14). *When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the Law* (Galatians 4:4). *Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same, that through death He might destroy him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, and release those who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage* (Hebrews 2:14-15)

3. Willing

Jesus said, *I lay down my life that I may take it again. No one takes it from Me, but I lay it down of Myself* (John 10:17,18). *Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross* (Hebrews 12:2).

4. Able

Justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus (Romans 3:24). *God demonstrates His own love toward us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us* (Romans 5:8). *He is able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them* (Hebrews 7:25).

Just as Boaz freely offered to be a kinsman redeemer for Naomi and Ruth, Jesus freely offers to be your kinsman redeemer. Have you accepted Him as your kinsman redeemer? Are you living in the fullness of all that He purchased for you, fullness of relationship with Him and with others and fullness of guidance by the Holy Spirit?

II. A Marriage and a Baby - Ruth 4:13-22

What a beautiful verse is Ruth 4:13! *So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son.*

A. Naomi's Fulfillment Through Her Kinsman Redeemer - 4:13-16

1. Naomi's Double Blessing – 4:14-16

Ruth and Boaz were not the only ones who were blessed! Through their marriage came a double blessing for Naomi. She would be able to live out her life on her ancestral land. She also had the joy of having a grandson who bore her son's name, would carry on the family inheritance, and care for her. This two-fold joy was due to Boaz as her kinsman redeemer.

2. Naomi's Delightful Future – 4:14-16

The women blessed the Lord for four blessings which they saw Naomi had from Him.

a. Restored life

Her life was restored to her through her grandson. She had joy and meaning to her life and a reason to live, the very thing she thought she was giving to Ruth.

b. Provision for old age

A prime value in the East is that children should care for their parents and grandparents. Naomi thought she would have no more children and therefore no grandchildren. But God had another plan for her. Obed would sustain her in her old age.

c. A loving daughter-in-law

Naomi's consistent godly walk in front of her Moabite daughter-in-law paid rich dividends. Not only was Ruth's whole life transformed into a life of faith in God and a new future in Israel, but Naomi had a loving and faithful friend for life. Naomi is the ultimate mother-in-law, one who knows God and reflects Him to others. God saw to it that she did not lose her reward.

d. Ruth better to her than seven sons

In that patriarchal society, seven sons were considered the height of blessing. Naomi had two sons and they were gone. The women saw that Ruth was better than seven sons would have been. Ruth had chosen to devote her life to Naomi though unrelated to her. What a beautiful reflection this was upon Ruth!

B. Messianic Continuity Through Boaz and Ruth - Ruth 4:17-22

1. Obed their son

The neighborhood women named the son of Boaz and Ruth, Obed, which means servant. Obed was probably born in the home of Boaz in Bethlehem. He was of the tribe of Judah.

2. Ancestors of David

Obed was the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David (1 Samuel 16:1-13). David was to be not only Israel's outstanding king, the model for all others after him, but the prototype of King Jesus, our Shepherd-King, who will one day sit on the throne of David (Luke 1:32).

3. The Line of Judah - Matthew 1:2-16 and Luke 3:23-38

Judah fathered (by Tamar) Perez,
who fathered Hezron,
who fathered Ram,
who fathered Amminadab (Luke),
who fathered Nahshon,
who fathered Salmon,
who fathered, (by Rahab) Boaz,
who fathered (by Ruth) Obed,
who fathered Jesse,
who fathered David

Luke's insertion of a generation, not mentioned in Ruth 4 or Matthew 1, suggests the possibility that generations were sometimes omitted in genealogies. This does not invalidate a genealogy but allows flexibility in dating, as we do not always know exactly how many years are covered. But we do know with certainty that the genealogies are accurate and trustworthy as they are given to us. They appear several times in Scripture: Genesis, Ruth, 1 Chronicles, Matthew, and Luke. They are always consistent. This verification is as good as you will find for any historical data in the secular realm.

By comparing these genealogies with other Biblical data we can arrive at an accurate conclusion about their historical placement and a very close conclusion about the numbers of generations themselves. There is not the wild inaccuracy that some critics would like to ascribe to them. In fact, they are far more accurate than contemporary accounts of other nations.

Concluding Applications

1. Choice and Commitment

Have you made Ruth's choice of the true God as your God? He is the Lord Jesus Christ. Will you commit yourself to live for Him? What changes in priorities will you need to make in your life?

2. Character and Cooperation

Will you cooperate with the Holy Spirit in developing a Christ-like character of love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23)? How will you cooperate with other believers in carrying out God's will in the world?

3. Courage and Continuity

Will you seek after the truth in God's word as your first consideration in all situations? Will you aim to follow and live out that truth in your life no matter where it takes you?

Will you live courageously by striving to continue the line of faith in others? How will you begin to do this if you have not already?