

## The Book of Ruth

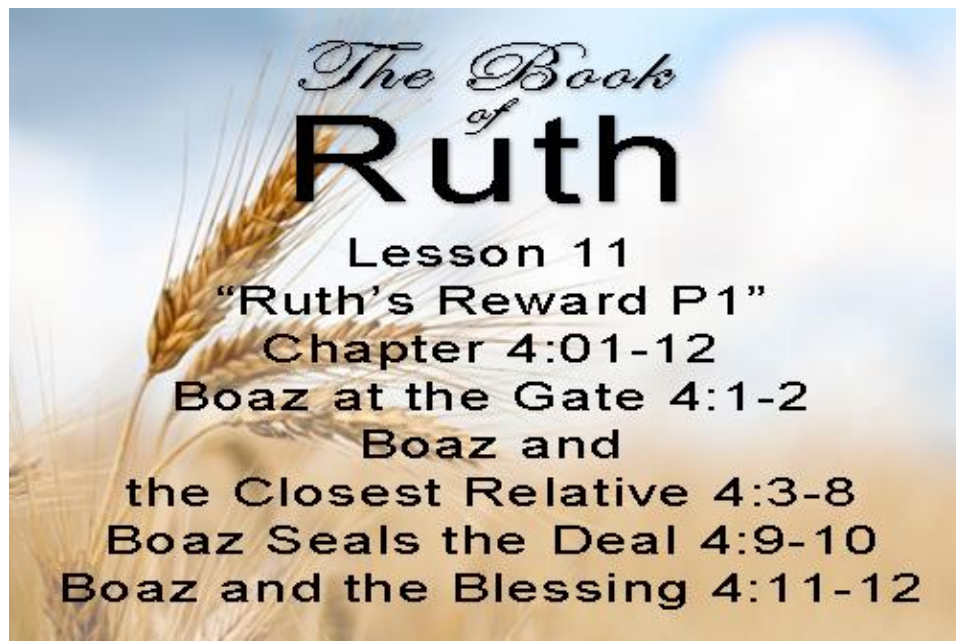
### LESSON 11

Chapter 4:1-12

"Ruth's Reward"

The Gate Conference

1. Boaz at the gate
2. Boaz and the closest relative
3. Boaz seals the deal
4. Boaz and the Blessing



#### **LAST WEEK:**

We closed out Ruth and Boaz's introduction to each other in a more private setting – atop the wheat pile at night. What happened there was perfectly planned and executed – “under the Law.” We found that there was nothing in the original text that even hinted at anything immoral, or apart from God's standards. Boaz was the perfect honorable gentleman, and Ruth followed

Naomi's instructions to the letter. The hardest moment, for both Ruth and Boaz, was the problem of Boaz not being the "closest" relative who qualified for the position of "Kinsman-Redeemer." Boaz cannot marry Ruth. Boaz and Naomi both make it clear that trusting the Lord God will bring about His purposes in this matter.

The beginning of this chapter is the story of the transaction of the redeemer. In the story of Ruth, the transaction is that of a Kinsman-Redeemer, who wants Ruth willingly and not because of the value of her property. As far as Boaz is concerned Ruth is the only important element of this transaction. Boaz considers Ruth not only a woman of quality but also of deep admiration and love.

As the nation of Israel makes its way along the path to redemption (from her sins of idolatry, as a covenant people), back to her God, she finds a redeemer who is anxiously awaiting her and willing to pay the price to acquire her, that is acquire back into full fellowship – because she (Israel) wants to be back into full fellowship.

### **Last week's Outline and Text:**

#### **III. Ruth's Reward Ruth P-2 3:10-18**

- F. Praise: 3:10** Then he said, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.
- G. Protection: 3:11** "And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.
- H. Problem: 3:12-14** "And now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. 13 "Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning." 14 So she lay at

his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

**I. Provision: 3:15** Again he said, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it." So, she held it, and he measured six measures of barley and laid it on her. Then she went into the city.

**II. Progress: 3:16-18** And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did it go, my daughter?" And she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'" 18 Then she said, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today."

### **INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS:**

The book was written to show God's grace to those who were in a covenant relationship to Him and had willfully wandered away, received chastisement because of their wandering, and sought a renewed relationship, through repentance, with their God.

We can apply this same principle to renewing a right relationship with God when sins remove us from His fellowship. We come to Him, in our age, (1 John 1:9 ff) confessing our sins (idolatry) and a renewed fellowship based on the shed blood of Jesus.

As we look at these verses, we also see the application that can apply to those who do not know God, who have turned and forsaken their sin and are approaching their redeemer in terms of salvation. His character is the same. He is loving, caring, and looking forward to the redemption of all those who would come. He awaits us as his bride. Those who come to Him only to do as

Ruth does, believe in Him (The Christ, Jesus) as the one who redeems, and to rest in His willingness and power to be that redeemer.

Boaz represents God (and Jesus the Christ, The Willing Redeemer) in these verses. We see that he is the one who in offering to be the redeemer, especially when he has no interest in wealth or property that we might have to offer, says "I will redeem." This redemption is based purely upon his character and his love.

After Boaz has made the transaction, the elders offer a great blessing upon him because of his selfless act. There are two blessings offered here. The first is that Boaz and Ruth would be blessed like Rachael and Leah. These two women were sisters who married the patriarch, Jacob. They were the mothers of most of the tribes of Israel. They were also Gentiles.

The second blessing is that Boaz and Ruth would be blessed like Perez who was the son of an incestuous relationship between his mother (Tamar) and her father (Judah). The blessing was for a multitude of families to come out of them. God worked through them in a mighty way and produced the lineage that would bring forth not only the nation of Israel, but the tribe of Judah from which not only King David would come but also the Messiah, Jesus, The Christ.

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**THE VISUALIZED TEXT** (NASB) (conjunctions & prepositions (and other important words) *underlined, words not in original text in italics*) (*alternate text in purple*)

## **Ruth's Reward Ruth 4:1-22**

### **F. Gate Conference: 4:1-12**

#### **1. Boaz At The Gate: 4:1-2**

**Now**  
**Boaz**  
*went up to the gate and*  
*sat down there, and*  
**behold,**  
*the close relative of whom Boaz spoke*  
*was passing by,*  
**so**  
*he [Boaz] **said,***  
*"**Turn aside** [from his walk by],*  
***friend,***  
***sit down here.**" And*  
*he [the close relative]*  
***turned aside and***  
***sat down.***

#### **4:1 Comments**

While much of the book has been about the plans of Naomi, now Boaz – on his own – gets to promote his promised role of redeemer for Naomi through Ruth, and also the promised role of Levirate Husband for Ruth. During much of the book it is easy to confuse these two goals.

Naomi needs a kinsman-redeemer in order to get out of abject poverty. She has lost her husband and her children, and only has temporary rights to her late husband's property. Upon her death, since her male children are already deceased, all of Elimelech's property rights will be acquired by someone outside the family that Elimelech established with Naomi. Ruth's kinsman-redeemer would be able to acquire Elimelech's property rights and restore them to Naomi and herself through Boaz.

Naomi would need a Levirate husband to continue her family line and provide a hereditary lineage, but she is too old to produce children (the whole point of the Levirate Marriage law).

Ruth, wife of Elimelech's late son Mahlon, has no male children to establish the family inheritance line either. However, if she were

to find a willing Levirate husband then she also would be the benefactor of a redeemer who was able to father male children. Boaz fulfills both needs. He is able to redeem Naomi (her land and property) and redeem Ruth (a wife who can bear children) in a single act.

The purpose of the dialog with the "close relative" is to demonstrate that Boaz is the only one **WILLING** to redeem at any cost.

**2 And**

**he** [Boaz]

***took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here."  
So, they sat down.***

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:2**

It takes a minimum of 10 Jewish men of at least 30 years old to have a synagogue. The inference here is that there is a whole synagogue full of elders present to authenticate the transaction that is about to be made. They are the official witnesses of this important transaction of redemption. He has called them and they agree, indicating by their willingness to sit with him.

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## **2. Boaz And The Closest Relative 4:3-8**

**3 Then**

**he** [Boaz] **said to the closest relative,**  
**"Naomi,**

***who has come back  
from the land of Moab,  
has to sell the piece of land  
which belonged to our brother  
Elimelech.***

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:3**

Boaz explains the situation that Naomi brings to the table. Land – In the Israel of the day you could not buy land. You could buy the rights to the use and harvest the land, but the actual land remained in the family who originally had it granted to them. Boaz is bringing a deal to this close relative that will allow him to "own" and receive the income from Naomi's land, in exchange for paying a price to her. This land was owned by Elimelech, he was dead, but Naomi had control of it for the rest of her life, as the widow.

#### 4 "So

***I [Boaz] thought  
to inform you, saying,  
'Buy it  
before [in front of] **those who  
are sitting here, and  
before the elders  
of my people.*****

***If you will redeem it,  
redeem it; but  
if not,  
tell me that I may know;  
for there is no one but you  
to redeem it, and  
I am after you.'"***

***And he [the first redeemer] said,  
"I will redeem it."***

#### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:4**

This land was an important article in Jewish life. The redeemer could purchase the land, paying Naomi for its use, and it would always continue to be part of the family inheritance. It was a deal for the redeemer because it gave him first choice in the matter of acquiring income producing land.

Boaz goes on to tell this closest relative that if he does not want it then he, Boaz, would redeem it himself. This was to say, it is an

incoming producing piece of property, and if you don't want the income then I'll purchase it myself... but...

**5 Then**

**Boaz said,  
 "On the day you  
 buy the field from the hand of Naomi,  
 you must also  
 acquire Ruth  
 the Moabite,  
 the widow of the deceased,  
 in order to  
 raise up the name  
of the deceased  
on his inheritance."**

**Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:5**

**But** – and there seems always to be a "But" in a deal that seems too good. But, if you acquire the land or Naomi – you also acquire her Moabite daughter and you must marry her as Levirate.

**6 And the closest relative said,  
 "I cannot redeem it for myself,  
 lest I jeopardize my own inheritance.  
 Redeem it for yourself;  
 you may have my right of redemption,  
for I cannot redeem it."**

**Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:6**

The "closest relative" balks at this information. Another wife? What will happen to my own family if this transaction interferes with their inheritance. More Children? What if Ruth's first child is a boy and all I have is girls, will he get everything? We can conjecture all kinds of reasons, but the text does not tell us. The "closest relative" says, "NO. I cannot redeem it."

**(4:7a)****Now**

***this was the custom  
in former times  
in Israel  
concerning the redemption and  
the exchange of land***

**Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:7a**

Our narrator enters here to say (at the time that the book was written, probably at about the time of the ascension of David to King of Israel) the custom of shoe removal was no longer practiced, and therefore was already degraded to the form it is found in the next verse (the time of the events of the book of Ruth) from the version in Deuteronomy as law a few hundred years earlier.

**(4:7b)*****to confirm any matter:******a man***

***removed his sandal and  
gave it to another [probably "the other"];  
and this was the manner of attestation in Israel.)***

**Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:7b**

This custom does not refer to the law about refusing to marry a brother's widow but was usual in the transfer of inheritances: for this relative was not a brother, but simply a kinsman; and the shoe was not pulled off by Ruth, but by the kinsman himself and it was his common sandals – not the dual skinned marriage shoe. The Targum renders, instead of his shoe, "his right-hand glove," it probably being the custom, in his time, to give that instead of a shoe. Jarchi says, "When we purchase anything new, it is customary to give, instead of a shoe, a handkerchief or veil."

Deut 25:7-10

**8 So the closest relative said to Boaz,  
 "Buy it for yourself."  
 And he removed his [the closest redeemer] **sandals.****

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:8**

In the Law version [the Torah, not the Targum] the woman seeking redemption of a redeemer who would not redeem her would remove a special shoe from the right foot of the proposed redeemer (indicating the breaking of a covenant) and spitting in his face (indicating the shame and loss of respect by the defaulting redeemer). By Ruth's time the law had been reinterpreted many times and the tradition had changed to the self removal of a shoe(s), which sometimes was coupled with spitting upon the ground.

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### **Boaz Seals The Deal 4:9-10**

**9 Then**  
*Boaz said to the elders and all the people,  
 "You are witnesses today  
 that I have bought  
from the hand of Naomi  
all that belonged to  
 Elimelech and  
all that belonged to  
 Chilion and Mahlon.*

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:9**

With the "closest relative" now out of the picture Boaz can redeem Naomi and marry Ruth.

10 **"Moreover,  
 I have acquired Ruth  
 the Moabitess,  
 the widow of Mahlon,  
 to be my wife  
 in order to  
 raise up the name  
of the deceased  
on his inheritance,  
 so that  
 the name  
of the deceased  
 may not be cut off  
from his brothers or  
from the court of  
 his birthplace;  
 you are witnesses today."**

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:10**

Boaz makes clear his intentions for Ruth and the legal reasons for his actions. He makes sure that the elders know that they are the legal witnesses in this transaction.

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### **Boaz And The Blessing 4:11-12**

11 **And all the people  
 who were in the court,  
 and the elders, said,  
 "We are witnesses.  
 May the LORD make the woman  
 who is coming into your home  
 like Rachel and Leah,  
 both of whom built the house of Israel;  
and may you achieve wealth**

***in Ephrathah and  
[may you] become famous  
in Bethlehem.***

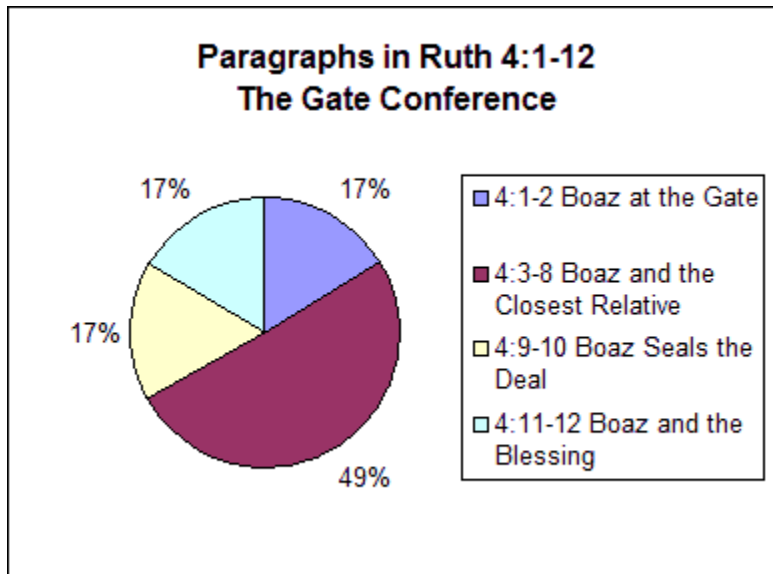
**12 "Moreover,  
may your house  
be like the house of Perez  
whom Tamar bore to Judah,  
through the offspring  
which the LORD shall give you  
by this young woman."**

### **Brief Commentary on Ruth 4:11-12**

The blessing that is presented here is unusual in that Rachel, Leah, and Tamar are all Gentiles, grafted into the nation of Israel and God's plan a very long time ago. The elders indicate that because of these women the "house of Israel" was "built" by these women – that their offspring were noble, productive, and prophetic. These families were the cornerstone of Israel in producing the family of Judah, the Davidic line, which eventually produced Messiah.

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## Verse Percentage Chart for Ruth 4:1-12




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Jeremiah 18:15

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2024-06-05 Original Class Date

2024-06-05 update