

## Ruth

The Book of Ruth is a delightful interlude between the hopes and tragedies of the preceding books starting with Exodus, and the tragedies and hopes of the succeeding six books that guides us through to the end of the kingdom of Judah in 586 BC. It is not only pleasant to read as a simple love story, but it also contains a treasure trove of Hebrew history and important biblical teachings. It is an essential primer of how God's plan for the redemption of those who would believe in Him has been formed. Understanding its primary message is essential if one is to fully appreciate why Jesus had to be a man, how the idea of a kinsman redeemer came about, how beautifully Boaz and Ruth are represented as types of Jesus and the church, and also some very interesting insights regarding David's ancestry as part of the genealogy of our Lord Christ Jesus. It is also essential to understand its message if one is to make sense out of the Book of Revelation.

The best way to discover and appreciate what God has given us in this precious book, I believe, is to savor it verse by verse, and where appropriate, take excursions into other parts of God's Word where other relevant insights may be found.

### CHAPTER ONE

Verse 1:

*"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."*

This tells us that this event occurred after Joshua's conquest on Canaan, and before the beginning of the kingdom period. This period of "judges" as identified in the Book of Judges was roughly between 1400 BC and 1100 BC. Scripture speaks of a total of 13 famines. Only one of those is recorded to have occurred during the period of Judges. It occurred just before Gideon became a judge (Judges 6:2-5). Therefore we may narrow down the likely time of this seven-year famine as being around 1240 to 1233 BC. Given the broader context of the time of judges, this famine was one of the six God-ordained judgments resulting from the spiritual condition of His people during this period.

(Leviticus 26:18, Deuteronomy 28:23, 24). We read of the other regional famines during the time of Abraham, (Genesis 12:10); Elijah (1Kings17:1); and David (2Samuel 21:1). Apparently this was a famine limited to Israel. It obviously did not affect Moab which was only across the Dead Sea from Judea. It appears to have effected all of Israel, or else they would have simply moved elsewhere within their own country rather than into a country traditionally hostile to Jews. It's likely that the famine had already lasted for a year or two before they felt forced to leave. Gideon was the sixth judge. This famine lasted seven years and was not caused by drought, but by the Midianties who oppressed all of Israel for seven years. The carrying away or destruction of the produce of the land is what caused the famine.

To understand what really happened, read Judges Chapters 6 and 7. It is on this basis that we must conclude that this was not a drought-induced famine, but instead one caused by God's judgment applied through the Midianites on these severely backslidden people. That is why the famine was limited to Israel and not nearby Moab. In this first verse, we are also told that they had been residing in Bethlehem Judah which in earlier times had been called Ephrath, which included the whole region around the village. They went to "sojourn" in Moab. The Hebrew word is "ger" which means "a resident alien". This also indicates that they had not intended to make it their permanent residence. It is interesting to note that the "country" of Moab is more accurately expressed from the Hebrew as the "field of Moab." This indicates that they settled in an area where the land was relatively flat like the grain growing area around Bethlehem, and therefore probably more conducive to the growing of that for which they were most skilled. This was in contrast with the rugged mountainous areas that characterized most of Moab.

Verse 2-5:

*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. 3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. 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 dwelt there*

*about ten years. 5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.”*

Here we are given the names of the family that went to Moab. Elimelech was the head of the family. His name means “God is my king,” and Naomi the mother’s name means “pleasant.” Mahlon was the oldest son and the husband of Ruth. His name means “unhealthy-sickening; to blot out.” Chilion, the name of the second son means, “wasting or pining, puny; to perish.” All we learn from verse 3 and 4 is that Elimelech died, that the sons married Moabite women, and the total time of Naomi’s sojourn lasted about ten years. When within these ten years, all of this happened, we are not told directly. I suspect that the father died not too long after they entered Moab, and the sons died at the end of the sojourn. It makes sense that upon the death of her sons, there was nothing there for Naomi, and returning home was her best chance for survival. If the son’s names are representations of their dominate characteristics, as were most names during the Old Testament period, then it is likely that both boys may were sickly from birth. I believe that the father would have permitted his sons to marry Moabites. Therefore they would not have married until his death. That they were married quite a while after his death seems likely because neither had off springs, and because Ruth was yet quite young when they traveled to Bethlehem.

While their father lived, his strength probably was sufficient to carry most of the family burdens. However, after his death, the family responsibilities fell on them. Without their wives, this might have been more than they could handle. How they managed to obtain wives, given that they were sickly, and also foreigners from a hated country, is difficult to understand absent God’s involvement. While Ruth is today a venerated Hebrew name, both Orpah and Ruth were clearly Moabite names, “Orpah” can mean “stiff-necked, firmness or fawn.” Ruth is more difficult to identify. It is generally viewed as “friendship, companion or desirable.” Some suggest that it comes from the word “rhr”. This would lend itself to be translated as “refreshment or satisfaction.”

Some who have commented on Elimelech's leaving his God-given property in the Promised Land, claim that it was a most sinful act for which he was severally punished. They see his untimely death, and that of his sons as that punishment. This may be a reasonable conjecture, but I believe that it is more than that. All of Israel was experiencing God's wrath because of their wicked ways. God used the Midianites as His means of punishment of the whole nation. It is likely that Elimelech had backslid, as had most of the Israelites, but I don't believe that leaving the country was any more offensive to God than the idol worship and other evil activities that were rampant throughout Judea. It was that which led to the wrath of God by His agents, the Midianites. Evidence of his wife's temporary back-sliding may be seen when Naomi urges her daughters-in-law to go back to their families and to their pagan gods.

Based on the meaning of his son's names, it is likely that they were too sickly to survive the added debilitating effects of the famine. To do what any good father would do, he sought to do what he thought was necessary for their well being. He went where there was a better chance of extending their lives. We are not told anything directly regarding their financial status when they left Bethlehem. However, as we learn later, Elimelech must have been a substantial landowner. Because the famine was prolonged, and would be fatal to his sons, he sold the rights to use his land. This was in order to survive and to fund their travel needs.

Initially, the land that Joshua and his people had conquered was divided up and given in perpetuity and individually to each of the families of Israel. The land could never be "sold" as we understand sold. It could however, be "leased" for a price, to others for some period of time. The original owner retained the right to purchase it back for the "fair market price" whenever he both chose to, and could afford to do so. Because of the jubilee year, "clause" in all such arrangements regardless of its intrinsic value, all land had to be returned without cost to the original owner, or to his estate, during the Jubilee year. Thus it is evident that a major factor affecting the value of the land to a potential buyer was when within the jubilee cycle did the purchase occur. Obviously if the

purchase took place right after the jubilee anniversary, it was worth far more than it would be near the end of the jubilee period.

The value in that sense depended on how many years the buyer would be able to benefit from the land before he had to give/return it. The Jubilee Year is considered to be the year that consists of the last half of the 49<sup>th</sup> year and the first half of the year that follows. This would be the first year of the next 49 year Jubilee interval. That way the Jubilee occurred every 7x7 or 49 years. We don't know exactly when within this cycle that Elimelech and his family left to go to Moab. It is evident that the Jubilee clause was significant to him, and especially for Naomi.

Is it possible to determine the actual dates of the Jubilee Year? Many scholars have attempted this, but I have found nothing, to the extent that I have studied the matter, that seems conclusive or that doesn't involve some assumption and conjecture. However, it seems to me that there may be a very reasonable approximation to be made from a study of the Book of Joshua. According to Floyd Nolan Jones chronology, the seven year famine in Canaan ended in 1445 BC. This is when Joshua began dividing up the land and conveying the God-appointed segments to each of the 12 Tribes.

Conquering and dividing didn't necessarily include occupancy to the point of peacefully setting there and beginning a normal life of farming the land, and adhering to the law of the Land Sabbaths and the Jubilee. We read for instance that after the conquest, Caleb had requested the mountain area which included the town of Hebron where the giants called Anikim yet lived. He had to kill or drive them out before the land could be of any use to him. We find in Joshua 15:63 that the City of Jebus, later called Jerusalem, was not taken, and remained Jebus and in the hands of the Jebusites until David conquered it about 400 years later. Much of Canaan while "conquered" and divided up among Israeli tribes was never fully vacated by the Canaanites as God had required. Most of the Canaanite tribes that were not killed, continued living where they had been, while the others were assigned to other locations within Canaan. Nevertheless, at first they lived in peace as a conquered people, and the Israelites lived among them.

Some scholars have suggested that it may have been about seven years after the land division before effectual use of the land begun. This seems to me to be a reasonable assumption. To have parceled out to each family, to start vineyards, grow crops and increase their herds would have occurred as early as possible after the division of the land. However, if we accept the seven years, then we may also assume that the very first 49 year Jubilee period may have begun around 1438 BC. In determining how the Jubilee year relates to the Book of Ruth, the subjection of the land by the Midians' began in 1240 BC or about 198 years later. Four periods of 49 years add up to 196 years. Starting the count in 1438 BC brings us to 1242 BC, two years before the famine began. It is my opinion that this is reasonably accurate, to within two to four years. Yet because of the range of uncertainty, we cannot be certain that they left just before or just after the Jubilee.

Some credence to this approximation may be found in Judges 2:7 where we find that *"And the people served the Lord all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders that outlived Joshua, who had seen all the great works of the Lord, that he did for Israel."* This suggests that their keeping of the Sabbath of the land and of the Jubilee, most likely began as soon as it was possible, perhaps a year or two earlier, but probably no later than the time here suggested. We will deal more with the Jubilee issue later when appropriate.

Jews were generally forbidden to marry Gentile women, especially those from Moab and Ammon (Deuteronomy 7:1-11, 23:3-6; Ezra 9:1-14; Nehemiah 13:1-3; ) Notice verse 3 and 4 tell us that it was after Elimelech died that the sons took wives. This suggests that he, knowing the law, had forbidden them to marry. Once free of their father's control, and when the strength of carnal desires exceeded that of their questionable religious convictions, they found and married Ruth and Orpah. *"...and they dwelt there about ten years..."* The ten years may be interpreted as saying that it was the length of their stay after the boys married. However, if we hold to the likelihood that the whole sojourn was about ten years, then the boys died during the tenth year. If we are to put this in an

orderly sequence of events as Scripture seems to indicate, I believe that we should conclude as follows:

1. Elimelech died within the first year or two sometime during the mid-portion of the 10 years of their sojourn.
2. Some short time later the sons married and continued to care for the women until they died during the tenth year.
3. They had no children, nor did they leave any significant provision for their mother or their wives. Their early death without issue, could be seen as their punishment for marrying Moabites.
4. With nothing to stay for, and having learned that the famine was over, Naomi chose to return to her kin. She set out right after her sons died, which probably occurred only a few months apart, in that tenth year.

#### Verse 6

*“Then she arose with her daughters-in-law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the Lord had visited his people in giving them bread.”*

This was when God, through Gideon, ended His judgment of Israel and drove out the Midianites. When we are told that Jehovah had visited His people by giving them bread, it seems to be a confirming statement that God had indeed judged, and after seven years had again withdrawn His judgment. The whole 300 year period of the Judges consisted of one judgment after another separated by a blessed interval which lasted only while they were obedient to the Lord’s will. Verse 6 says, “giving them bread.” In a way this is a play on words. “Bethlehem” means “house of bread”. As we will see again later, the Bethlehem area must have been a major grain growing region. I believe that Scripture leads us to believe that Canaan was generally a semi-arid region more beneficial to grazing rather than farming. The soils, topography and rainfall in the Bethlehem region seem to have been one of the important exceptions.

## Verses 7-9

7 *“Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah. 8 And Naomi said unto her two daughters-in-law, Go, return each to her mother’s house: the Lord deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me. 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.”*

Here the word “return” is a translation of the word “shun.” It is used here as a physical return, but it is also an expression of a spiritual return in other places in Scripture. The text says that “they” went to return. Actually only Naomi was returning, given that the girls had never been in Israel. They were Moabites, simply leaving Moab. How can we reconcile this seemingly scriptural “technical error”? I believe that this was a true statement from Naomi’s point of view in that she may have uniquely applied an interesting ancient spiritual message.

Consider this: The relationship between Naomi and her daughters-in-law was one of very strong mutual love and respect. This suggests that these women must have been wonderful wives to her sons. They were what must have been in her mind, truly God-ordained marriages. She knew from Scripture what God had said about the sanctity of marriage, especially in Genesis 2:24. There God decreed that “man shall cleave unto his wife and they shall be one flesh.” It may have been in her mind, after both of her son’s deaths, that each of these women were what remained of that “one flesh,” wherein each had been complete with her sons while they lived. Therefore, I suggest that when she spoke these words, she may have been thinking that some residual portion of her sons were yet with her in these two wives. Because God is the Author of the entire Bible, thereby causing it to be absolutely free from any error, this verse is not in error, but what it tells us is true, and I believe it is true for the reasons here given. I also suspect that it is conveying a message for all of us about the sanctity of marriage and the deeper more enduring meaning of “cleave.”



In verse 8 we find that Naomi must have had second thoughts about bringing her daughters-in-law with her to Israel. In this situation, we see her love expressed in a physical sense. As they walked, and before she spoke, she probably spent many hours in thought regarding what would be best for them. She probably reasoned that to bring these two Moabite women into Israel would not be in their best interests, either spiritually or physically. The Israel she had left ten years earlier was no citadel of godly faith or conduct. The two women were of a hated race, and their pagan religion, along with the fact that they were “penniless widows” rather than virgins, and of a kind that God had told His people to avoid, made in Naomi’s mind the likelihood of a good marriage, and a spiritual conversion essentially impossible. Furthermore, all that had befallen her, as we see later, had made her very bitter and probably backslidden in her own faith. That she was returning penniless and a widow, too old to attract a husband and to have children, gave her no hope even for her own future.

As she considered all of these things, what seemed best for Orpah and Ruth would be to go back, each of them to their mother’s house, and hopefully each find “rest” in their respective future husband’s houses. Because of her above described reasoning, she put any hope of spiritual redemption for them aside and advised them of the best choice from the physical perspective. Their likelihood of having a second married life in Moab was far greater than in Israel. The statement “to her mother’s house” is strange and contrary to what was the normal pattern for a widow, who generally returned to the house of her father (Genesis 38:11; Leviticus 22:13; Numbers 30:16; Deuteronomy 22:21; Judges 19:23, etc.) The “house of the mother” appears only three times in Scripture (Genesis 24:28 and in Song of Solomon 3:4, 8:2).

What this means is that Naomi is urging them to seek to re-marry so that they could find security in the house of their future husbands. The mother’s house was the place where all matters of marriage were dealt with during those days. The word “rest” is found in verse 9. It refers to the state of marriage, where only in the husband, and in their home could a woman find security and rest. We should notice that in Naomi’s prayer for these girls, it was not to Chemosh, the god of the Moabites. In her prayer she spoke of Jehovah

God, the only true God. She spoke this while yet in Moab urging them to go back to Chemosh. This means that she knew that Jehovah's higher authority extended beyond Israel. Therefore, she reasoned that some form of His blessing could, if He would, be applied to these two Moabite women in spite of their presumed rule by this pagan god.

#### Verse 10-13

*10 "And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee, unto thy people. 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? 12 Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have a husband also tonight, and should also bear sons; 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."*

Here in verse 10 we see both women rejecting the first admonition; they both intended to stay with their beloved Naomi. Her second admonition was far more powerful and persuasive. Many have rightly questioned the quality of her faith when she urged them to go back to their pagan culture and its false gods. However, if we think about it from an earthly perspective, this was very pragmatic advice as we have already noted. It's almost like Abraham's claim that Sarah was his sister. His too, while it was hardly a godly way, it was a pragmatic strategy.

Naomi was returning as an old and bitter beggar. Their future with her, as it seemed to her, would be worse than going back to their Moabite families. She made a very convincing appeal. In verse 11-13 she points out that she would have no future sons for them to marry, and if by chance she did have sons, the women would be way too old to ever marry them. This is a subtle reference to the Levirate Law. Therefore, if they went back, there would at least be some chance for each of them acquiring a husband, a home and a physical family. As we see, all of her arguments were based on the belief that Jehovah had gone forth against her. Naomi realized that all that happened to her was not by chance, but by the hand of God. At that time, she had no way of knowing if or when

God's hand would turn away from punishment. Here we also have a very subtle clue as to Naomi's age. When she said "...and also bear sons....," she must have believed that she was perhaps yet capable of having children. I believe that this suggests that she may have been no older than in her mid-forties, assuming children years are the same as today.

#### Verse 14

*"And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave to her."*

Their initial response was to all cry together, given their seemingly hopeless condition. The two girls each responded differently to Naomi's admonition. Orpah kissed her while Ruth "clave" to her. Clave is from the Hebrew word "dabak" which means to stick like glue. As we see, Orpah' saw the logic and merit in returning, and so her kiss was a farewell kiss, while Ruth's response was an expression of uncompromising love and commitment. In one sense, the reason that Orpah left may be considered the same one that caused Ruth to stay with Naomi. The fact that Naomi would no longer have a husband or sons, and would therefore be entirely dependent on the girls, for her care, may have helped to cause Orpah to return, while it caused Ruth to stay. I see Ruth on her knees, her arms wrapped tightly around Naomi's legs clinging to her as a child desperate for its mother's attention to what it considers to be of utmost importance.

#### Verse 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."*

This was her third admonition toward Ruth. Her sister-in-law had taken Naomi's advice and gone back after the second admonition. With this example, it was time for Ruth to go also "Gone back unto her gods." The chief god of the Moabites and the Ammonites was Chemosh. Later, Chemosh was worshipped in Israel as well. Evidence found on the Moabite stone suggests that Chemash and Moloch were the same god. However,

Solomon is said to have built a sanctuary to Chemosh and another to Moloch on the Mt. of Olives. These remained there until they were destroyed by King Josiah over 300 years later. Chemosh like Moloch demanded infant sacrifice.

Verse 16 and 17

*16 "And Ruth said, Entreat 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: 17 where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me."*

Here we see the ultimate expression of human love. It is often viewed as the apex of all literary expressions of love, both religious and secular. Furthermore, it is a solemn declaration of the love and faith that symbolizes the true Christian. We see two choices made in these verses and the previous one. We may consider this as an analogy regarding Christian faith. Both Orpah and Ruth loved Naomi, however, while Orpah was loathe to leave Naomi, she did not love her enough to leave Moab for her sake. We might easily equate this to Christianity. Many have affection for Christ, yet they fall short of salvation, because they chose not to forsake the things of this world for Him. They love Him, yet are not saved because they do not love Him enough.

Ruth is an example of the grace of God inclining the soul to choose Jesus with complete unconditional commitment and love. This is something profound for each us to consider. If you are reading this you probably consider your self a believer in Jesus. However, how is your love for Him best represented? Do you have the type of love for Jesus that Orpah had for Naomi, or do you have the type of love for Jesus that Ruth had for Naomi? Only Ruth's type of love is symbolic of a saving faith. Orpah's type of love, in the heart of a professing Christian is inadequate unto salvation. We should each examine our faith carefully to determine whether it is a Ruth type, or an Orpah type.

As we read this most beautiful expression of love, notice that it is a seven-fold declaration:

1. For whither thou goest, I will go;
2. where thou lodgest, I will lodge;
3. thy people shall be my people;
4. and thy God my God;
5. Where thou diest, will I die;
6. and there will I be buried:
7. The Lord do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

Notice also that Ruth invokes the name God “Jehovah,” not Chemosh. This may indicate that she was already leaning toward believing in the true God. Perhaps her husband and Naomi had been instrumental in her drift away from Chemosh and toward Jehovah. Apparently the persuasiveness of Orpah’s husband may not have been as successful. We should notice that these are the first of Ruth’s words that were recorded. Note, also that her decision was both social and religious. *“your people shall be my people” and your God my God.*”

#### Verse 18

*“When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.”*

When Naomi saw that Ruth was steadfast, that is she expressed unwavering commitment, she no longer admonished her to go back. There is a rabbinic tradition that originated from these passages. Would-be Gentiles proselytes must be admonished (discouraged) three times as Naomi did to Ruth. If this does not dissuade them, then they can be accepted and converted.

#### Verse 19-22

*19 “So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were to come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? 20 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty*

*hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went out full, and the Lord hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the Lord hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me? 22 So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.”*

Some Bible scholars considered this trip to have been about 75 miles long. It was far from straight because they had to go around a portion of the Dead Sea through very rugged wild terrain which included desert and wilderness. From the Moabite highlands to the Jordan valley was a descent of about 4500 feet, and then to ascend to Bethlehem was about 3750 feet. As we learn in verse 22, they must have arrived in Bethlehem in early to mid April, during the barley harvest season. The response to their arrival was that “all the city was moved about them.” The Hebrew word for “moved” is “hum” or “huwm.” There are at least thirteen Hebrew words translated as “moved.” This one only appears here in Ruth 1:19, and nowhere else. It means “made uproar, agitate, murmur, disturb greatly.” It emphasizes the great excitement surrounding the return of Naomi which suggests that Elimelech and his family were well known before they left. It also means that those people “stuck it out” where they were, and survived.

When she was questioned, she said not to call her “Naomi” which means “pleasant”, but instead to call her Mara or Marah which means “bitter.” This response was an emotional response to her desperate heart-crushing situation. They should not call her Naomi because “the almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.” Here she uses the Elshaddai, name for God, which is used 48 times in the Old Testament. The name emphasizes God’s power. When she said that she went out full, she was not talking about wealth, or her stomach, but with a husband and two sons. She was now “empty” because her family was gone.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Verse 1-3

*1 “And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter. 3 And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.”*

In verse 1 we learn that Naomi knew of a kinsman of her husband Elimelech who was very wealthy and whose name was Boaz. In this verse the Hebrew word for “kinsman” is “yoda” meaning “to know by experience, familiarity, acquaintance, or friend.” Of the 12 times that the word “kinsman” is used, in Scripture, this is the only time it is used with this meaning. All of the other times it comes from the Hebrew word “goal” which means, “to redeem, to be next of kin, and as such to buy back a relative’s property, marry his widow, avenge etc.” Therefore her first mention of the man did not imply that Boaz would be their redeemer. Boaz is the only one with this name anywhere in the Bible. Boaz is also the name given to one of the pillars of Solomon’s Temple. Most commentators believe that Boaz comes from “bo” and “az” meaning “In whom there is strength.” Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaun claims that it is derived from the root word “baaz” which means “alacrity” (cheerful readiness and willingness to do a favor) also “fleet swift and rapid.”

To keep them from starving, and sparing Naomi the embarrassment of begging, Ruth set out to be a gleaner, where at that time, barley was being harvested. She just “hap” (happened) to go to Boaz’s field, not knowing that it was his. Mosaic Law required the land owner to harvest his fields always leaving the accidentally dropped or missed grain stalks for the gleaners. This is how the poor were helped. They were allowed to follow the reapers and claim any grain that was left behind. When Ruth said, “in whose sight I

shall find grace”, she was not speaking of Boaz, because she didn’t even know that he had a barley field, or where it was. She was only praying that wherever she went the owner would allow her to glean with the other poor folks. That she just happened to go to Boaz’s field was to her at first, a mere coincidence. The idea of “coincidences” is not a “kosher” word. Where we find what may seem to a believer to be a coincidence, it is in fact, where God is working undercover.

#### Verse 4

*“And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The Lord be with you. And they answered him, The Lord bless thee.”*

Here we have Boaz’s linkage to Bethlehem, Elimelech’s and Naomi’s home town. His greeting to his servants, and their response, suggests that this was a circle of believers who were members of the remnant of that day.

#### Verses 5-8

*5 “Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? 6 And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: 7 and she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. 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 seems that Boaz spotted Ruth the moment that he saw what was going on in the field. The Hebrew word as used here for foreman is “naar,” indicating that he was a young man. When he was asked about the “damsel” the Hebrew word was “narah” the feminine form of naar, which means a young woman or girl. Other than the fact that she was very attractive, physically, when the rabbi’s are asked the question, “What caught his eye” they may have, for once, come up with a good point, when they say that it was her extreme modesty, they say:



“All the other women bend down to gather the ears of corn but she sits and gathers. All the other woman hitch up their skirts and she keeps her’s down. All the other woman jests with the reapers while she is reserved. All the other women gather from between the sheaves while she gathers from that which is abandoned.”

In verse six the servant reveals who Ruth is. As we learned earlier, the rumor about Naomi’s return had spread far and wide. Therefore when Boaz heard the name Naomi, he immediately knew more than most others did, because he had been a very near relative of Elimelech, and surely remembered his departure and the sad story of Naomi’s return with Ruth. I suspect that it was love at first sight for him. Rabbinic tradition indicates that he was a recent widower who had no children. I suspect that he, at that moment had marriage in mind, if it were to be God’s will. Notice that it was an “unnamed servant” that introduced Boaz to Ruth.

As a type of Christ and Church, isn’t this also a repeated analogy of how Isaac met his wife Rebeckah through an unnamed servant? In verse 7 the servant repeats what she had asked of him, that is that he let her glean with the other gleaners. He also told Boaz that she had gleaned all day. This suggests that Boaz arrived at the field in later afternoon, and went to where she was to urge her to not go in any other fields, but to return the next day. Instead of staying with the gleaners, she was to reap along with his female reapers. She was to continue there not only to the end of the March / April barley harvest, but also through the May / June wheat harvest. Apparently when he said “abide here fast by my maidens” he meant to move forward, up close to the women reapers where the “pickins” were the best. Surely when he said, “my maidens” he did not mean the other gleaners, because they were not his maidens. We normally think of male reapers, but this seems to have been a job for both men and women, but apparently, this was for only women. Notice that when he addressed Ruth, he called her “my daughter” strongly indicating a large difference in their ages, a fact more explicitly revealed in the next chapter.

### Verse 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”*

Again Boaz urges Ruth to stay in his field only. Notice how immediately and forcefully he took charge of her safety and well being. He had already charged all of the young men to leave her alone. Obviously, most of them were already eyeing her and getting ready to attempt some kind of a relationship with her. He then offered her something that the other gleaners didn't have, the right to drink his reaper's water.

### Verse 10-13

*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? 11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been showed 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. 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, 13 Then she said, Let me find favor 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.”*

As Ruth physically fell on her face, in unbridled humility and humbleness, her verbal response was one of great surprise at being the recipient of such grace. Her surprise was that Boaz was treating her so kindly even though she was a foreigner. As noted, it is clear that Boaz knew all about her from the notoriety that her's and Naomi's arrival had caused. Until this meeting however, he was unaware that Ruth was that unusually

conspicuous gleaner that he saw at a distance. In verses 11, 12 Boaz explains his kindness by reiterating her exemplary conduct since she had arrived. Then he asks God to reward her, that is, the God of Israel, “Under whose wings thou art come to trust.” This is called a “zoomorphism,” comparing God with some aspects of an animal, like a chick seeking protection under its mother’s wings. Jesus used a very similar expression in Matthew 23:37. Here we have love at first sight by Boaz, although Ruth didn’t know it and I don’t believe had any thoughts of that nature in her head or heart regarding this elderly man. It’s unlikely that she had much else on her mind at that time other than the survival of Naomi and herself. She responded to his kindness by expressing awe and humble gratitude. While Ruth didn’t know of his intentions at that time, it wouldn’t take long for Naomi to put “2 and 2” together.

Ruth referred to herself as a “handmaiden”. The Hebrew word she used was “shiphah” which denotes a slave girl who belonged to the lowest social class, and means that she accepted the fact that hers were to be the most difficult of menial tasks. If she had used the other word, “alma” she would have been characterizing herself in a higher category of handmaiden. Here we see evidence that during her years of being in the Hebrew family, she obtained a good knowledge of Hebrew language. In saying this to Boaz, she was claiming to be even lower than a “shiphah.” She mentioned to Naomi how very kind and encouraging he was when she had spoken of herself as being of such a lowly status that she wasn’t even of the stature of an ordinary handmaiden.

#### Verse 14-17

*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. 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: 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. 17 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barely.”*

At the meal time “he reached her parched corn.” The word “reached” is from the Hebrew word, “tzabat” which means “to seize with the hand” and is used only here and nowhere else in the Bible. It means that Boaz himself served her with his own hands.

What an example of extreme favoritism! She went from the lowest of the gleaners to the lunch table of the reapers. Then more special privileges were piled on. Boaz told the reaper to let her glean “among the sheaves”, something never allowed of gleaners. It meant that she could pick up grain close to the reapers, even before the reapers had finished. Then he even instructed them to leave bundles of grain for her to pick up. Sheaves were the handfuls of grain stalks the reaper would grab in her left hand, as she used the sickle in his right hand to cut, and thus separate them from their roots. As we learned in the first chapter, his employees had great respect for Boaz, yet here they saw his altruism grow to a ridiculous height for this one girl. It wasn’t difficult for them to realize that something extraordinary was about to take place. It was evident to all that he has a very special liking and attraction for Ruth. If he was in fact a widower, and it makes perfect sense that he was, it wasn’t difficult to see where he was going, that is if only he could somehow reach her heart. Most likely, being old enough to be her father, or more likely her grandfather, would be no easy task short of God’s intervention, which most certainly did occur.

Regarding the “parched grain”, the Hebrew word is “gali” which means roasted. It was the custom to take perhaps several sheaves, bind them together, and hold them over a fire until the grain chaff was nearly burned off, which meant that the grains were sufficiently roasted. This was a favorite food all over the country during this season. After the meal, she continued to glean, and by the end of this day, had accumulated a whole ephah of gleaned and cleaned barley. This was about a bushel, or thirty pounds, enough for the two of them, for as much as five days, if that was all they had to eat.

Verse 18-22

*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. 19 And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man's name with whom I wrought today is Boaz. 20 And Naomi said unto her daughter-in-law, Blessed be he of the Lord, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen. 21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest. 22 And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter-in-law, It is good, my daughter, that thou go out with his maidens, that they meet thee not in any other field."*

Here is where we learn that Ruth and Naomi lived in "the city," and that at the meal with Boaz and the reapers, she probably was deliberately given more than she needed to be "sufficed" so she would give it to Naomi. The moment Naomi saw the sheaves and the amount of gleaning, she knew that something was up. The huge amount alone alerted her, because no gleaner under normal circumstances, could possibly acquire that much grain in one day. This led to the two part question "where have you gleaned today" and "where have you wrought?" These may seem redundant at first glance, but under the circumstance they are not. Because of the excessive amount of grain, so much more than could be gleaned, Naomi was asking "where did you procure so much?" The word "wrought" is a translation of the Hebrew word "asah" which can also mean "procure" Thus we see Naomi wondering whether or not there has been some additional source of the grain. Once Naomi heard who owned the field, everything started to fall into place. I believe that she suddenly realized that Boaz was not merely a "moda" a kinsman friend, but was a "goal" a kinsman who would redeem her land, and more, much more.

### Verse 23

*"So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest; and dwelt with her mother-in-law."*

As previously noted, there were two harvests, one soon after the other. First, was the barley harvest, followed a while later by the wheat harvest. There is something here that is very profound and prophetic from both a pure Jewish and a Christian perspective. The beginning of the barley harvest was also the beginning of the Feast of First Fruits, which was around the end of March or beginning of April. It is also called the time of the Passover. Then the wheat harvest began around the end of May or the beginning of June and continued to the end of June or first part of July. (Leviticus 23:15-21; Deuteronomy 16:9-12; 1Samuel 21:9) The end of the wheat harvest provided another cause to celebrate. This celebration, fifty days later, was called Shavout or the Feast of Weeks, which Christians celebrate as Pentecost. Thus we can see both the celebration of the Passover, when Christ would be crucified, and the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), fifty days later when the Holy Spirit descended from heaven to dwell in the hearts of all saved souls. We see in chapter 3, that God has begun His payment of Ruth's wages for her loyalty to Naomi through the generosity of Boaz. This would be only the down payment!

## CHAPTER 3

### Verses 1-5

*1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? 2 And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshing floor. 3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. 4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. 5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.”*

In verse 1 Naomi asks “shall I not seek rest for thee?” Here again the same word is used for rest, as in 1:19. It is used here in that same context, and may be interpreted as a state of rest, or a condition of rest and security obtained only through marriage. This is an example of the divine and human working together to carry out God’s purposes. Naomi had prayed for this, and now she saw God answering that prayer through Boaz. Naomi had three serious issues to deal with. First, was how Elimelech’s name could be maintained since both of her sons were dead without issue. Second, how could she protect and regain the inheritance of the land which Elimelech had left for her. And third, how she could provide rest and security for Ruth. She realized that if it was God’s will, the marriage of Ruth to Boaz, could solve all three. She reasoned however, that if such a heavy load were to be placed on Boaz, he might not respond at all, that is he would not even marry Ruth.

We will see later that this was exactly the nearer kinsmen redeemer’s response. Instead of instructing Ruth, Naomi could have gone directly to Boaz herself and claimed redemption through marriage under this somehow “broadened” Levirite Law. However, because she could see that Boaz wanted Ruth, she knew that he would not choose to marry Naomi so as to restore her land and provide Elimelech with an heir. In that matter, an heir may not have even been possible given that she, by her own admission, was probably too old to have children. Finally, her concern for Ruth’s security was of greater

importance and so her instruction to Ruth centered around what she thought were in Ruth's best interest only, that is to simply have Ruth ask Boaz to marry her. Again, in doing so, she forfeited any possible redemption rights for herself. This of course, would not leave her personally "out in the cold", because she knew that because of Ruth's love she could never forsake her, and so she knew that somehow she would be cared for.

It is difficult for me to picture this as a Levirite marriage in the strict legal sense, as some expositors do, because where the conditions for such a marriage are described in Deuteronomy 25:5-10, the law deals with a brother marrying a dead brother's widow, and having a son to preserve his brother's heritage. I see nothing in Deuteronomy that extends this law in the realm here being considered. It would only be applicable if Elimelech had been Boaz's brother. Failure for this circumstance to be applicable under the Levirite rule, there must have been some other related rule or tradition under which this was applicable. Perhaps this was a rule similar to that involving the exception to the law that provided for the daughters of Zelophehad to inherit their father's land (Numbers 26:32) The word "livir" is Latin for "a husband's brother's", In Hebrew, the term for the marriage of a brother-in-law is "yebum" or "yevum". The reason for this "Law of Moses" is to raise up a seed for the dead brother in order to preserve his "blood line" and land ownership within his otherwise disenfranchised family. In this case, since there was no brother to do this, it appears that the law was extended to allow a near kinsman to do this. Apparently this is how Boaz, a near kinsmen could qualify for the wholeness of the tasks he had accepted. We will get back to this later.

In verse 2 we see that Naomi had a plan that she meant to begin implementation that very evening. It may seem humorous to us as we read all that she first instructed Ruth to do, that is wash herself, put on perfume, and then dress in her best rainment. Most likely Ruth had no dressy clothes, perhaps it was to wear what ever else she had instead of her black mourning clothes that she probably had worn since her husband's death. She was to make herself not known to Boaz until an appointed time. This celebration was for the men only. To have had women sleeping there in mixed company would not have been "kosher." She must have hid nearby where she could not be discovered. She was to



remain hidden until after the eating and drinking had ended and they all laid down on the threshing floor to sleep. Naomi knew that it was customary for the owner to spend the night there to protect his valuable investment. Ruth must have been where she could see but not be seen, so that she could mark in her memory just where he chose to sleep after the lights were put out. Only after everyone was asleep, including Boaz, was she to come to the place near his feet. She was to uncover his feet which would eventually awaken him, when they got cold. All this Ruth said she would do.

#### Verses 6-14

*6 “And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. 8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. 9 And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid: for thou art a near kinsman. 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 followed not young men, whether poor or rich. 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. 12 And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. 13 Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman’s part: but if he will not do the part of the kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of the kinsman to thee, as the Lord liveth: lie down until the morning. 14 And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.”*

After all this preparation, Ruth proceeded to do all as Naomi had directed. Where we are told that “Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry,” doesn’t necessarily mean that he was drunk, for that would be out of character for such an obviously righteous man. It means that he was full and satisfied and grateful after a good dinner and the

completion of a bountiful harvest. The harvest was probably especially gratifying as he remembered the seven years of heartbreaking denial of the fruits of his labors.

It was appropriate that he alone would lie down at the end of the heaps of grain, while his servants found other places on the threshing floor. It appears that it was customary to celebrate the end of the threshing, and stay there protecting the grain until morning when they would begin the task of transporting the grain to the storage houses. Being at the end of the heaps of grain was a well defined and private place which made it easier for Ruth to find him, and where her presence and their conversation were less likely to be detected. (God had thought of everything!) The Ruth came softly, uncovered his feet, and laid down. Next in verse 7, we learn that at midnight, presumably because his feet were cold he turned over and was afraid. The Hebrew word here translated as “fear” is “charad” which can mean “shuddering with terror, discomfort, quake, and tremble.” In the context of this verse, there is nothing that should suggest that the “fear” was shuddering in terror. It is very probable that the discomfort and trembling (shivering) was because of his cold feet. When he turned over, it probably was to readjust his mantle to again cover his feet. That is when he discovered “a woman at his feet.” What a shock this must have been because women were not allowed to participate in the overnight celebration for obvious reasons related to temptation and morality (verse 14b)

In verse 9 he first asks her who she is. Her reply is much different than it was when they first met. She identified herself as “Ruth your handmaid.” This time she used the word “amah” this means that she was no longer the lowest of the low, but as one who was eligible for marriage. Then as she had been instructed by Naomi, she asked him to spread his skirt (mantel or robe) over her. The word “skirt” is from the Hebrew word, “kanaph” which means “an edge or extremity (of a bird) a wing, (of a garment or bed clothing) a flap, overspreading, uttermost part,” etc. It comes from a prime root which means to protect. The lower fringe of a man’s robe was embroidered with his unique signet. It was representative of his identity, and in those days would function like a signet ring, or as a stamp in later years. The fringe could be pressed in wax to form a seal for a

document. Later we read that David, when he caught Saul sleeping in a cave, cut off this portion of his garment, thereby depriving him of his identity.

Naomi had told Ruth to ask him to cover her with his robe, to signify her desire to marry him. However here she adds something that Naomi did not mention. She added “for art thou a near kinsman.” This little “add on” had great significance and again showed her great love and care for Naomi. Through her instructions, Naomi had only planned to provide a husband for Ruth, and that is all that her instructions would have accomplished. However, by invoking the “goal clause” that is the kinsman redeemer requirement, she was risking her own security by asking for the very outcome that Naomi had considered, but dismissed for fear that Boaz would reject such a large and costly responsibility. By simply asking Boaz to marry her, there would be “no strings attached”. There was nothing in this for Naomi directly, other than seeing her beloved daughter-in-law made secure and, hopefully happily married with family. Now, if Boaz accepted, he not only would have Ruth, as his wife, whom he dearly wanted, but he also would have to render Naomi whole. This involved not only restoring her land, but providing an heir for her dead son and thereby preserving and continuing the Elimelech lineage. This meant that the first son born to Ruth would effectually be Naomi’s son Mahlon’s heir, and thus her guardian as the child’s grandmother.

This is not a matter or a process easy for us to understand. Asking for Boaz to marry her was as simple as expressed by the robe covering request. Invoking the kinsman redeemer requirements added such costly additional dimensions, thereby greatly risking the likelihood of the marriage. It all boiled down again to Ruth’s uncompromising and sacrificial love for Naomi. Even beyond what has already been addressed regarding her sacrifice, we find implied in verse 10 even more of such evidence.

Here Boaz is pointing out that through her charging him to be her husband and Naomi’s kinsmen redeemer; she had forfeited what would probably have been a happier fulfilling life. His recognition of this, is that she had chosen to marry an old man for the sake of Naomi rather than some rich young man with whom she would have found much greater

happiness. Boaz realized that young women of such great inner and outer qualities would have had no problem marrying any young man of her choice, and doing it out of love rather than family duty. Furthermore, her first child would have been hers, not Naomi's. Again her first son would not have been her's or Boaz's. Naomi would have sole rights to him. Boaz loved her enough to accept any and all responsibilities that her charge to him would require, including the fact that very likely his would be an unrequited love. Surely she admired and respected him greatly and was grateful for all he had done. She probably had love for him as she might have had for a grandfather. However, because he was old enough to be her grandfather, any thought of "romantic" love which she may have desired, would never be. Her care for Naomi was her primary motivation.

In verse 11 Boaz assures her that he will do all that she has asked. In mentioning that all of the City knew that Ruth was a virtuous woman, he was pointing out how, in a few short months, she had impressed the entire community of her great virtue. Thus none of her actions in this matter would be considered immoral. However, in verse 12 Boaz reveals a potential problem. There is a nearer kinsman of which it seems that Naomi had not known about. Some suggest that perhaps this is why Boaz had not made a move toward Ruth earlier. Then in verse 13 he urged her to stay the night and not try to get home in the deep darkness of the night. Home was probably a considerable distance. Then he promised that in the morning he would immediately deal with the issue of the other kinsman. I suspect, that he not only knew of this kinsman, but also knew much about him, his family, his financial status, etc. So he had a pretty good idea of what he would do when he was confronted with the whole of the responsibilities.

When Boaz said, "as the Lord liveth," he was committing himself by an oath, as YHWH lives, to do everything possible to fulfill her requests. When Boaz tells her to tarry that night, The Hebrew word used here for "tarry" is "lun" and not "shachour". Had he used the word "shachour" it would have had a sexual connotation. However, "lun" did not. Anyone less virtuous than Boaz, might have taken this marriage proposal as license to have a sexual encounter during that night. However, Boaz chose integrity over passion and so was committed to do things right, including not contaminating the relationship that

might ensue if the near kinsman did take on the whole responsibility. In response to his request to tarry, she lay at his feet until morning and left before dawn when it was not yet possible for “one to discern another”

#### Verse 15

*“Also he said, Bring the veil that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city.”*

Before she left she had to remove her mantle so that it could be made into a sack-like container to hold six measures of barley, which he laid on her. We don’t know what six measures amounted to, but it must have been fairly heavy because he had to help her get it on her back.

#### Verses 16-18

*16 “And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. 17 And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law. 18 Then said she, Sit still, my daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.”*

The “who are you” doesn’t mean she didn’t recognize her. It simply means something like, “what has gone on, or how did you do with the assignment I gave you, or did he accept you to be his wife, as I had planned”? She answered by telling her “all that the man had done.” Then she told Naomi that what she brought back was six measures of barley, which Boaz said to give to her mother-in-law. The six measures for Naomi was more than simply some grain for her as a gift, it was in fact a message that he knew she would understand. Notice how specific Boaz was about the six measures. And how dutiful Ruth was in telling Naomi that the bag of grain amounted to precisely six measures. Naomi recognized that this was more than a gift. It was a very clear message of hope to her. Six is the number of incompleteness. Boaz was telling her that he would seriously implement all that had been asked of him. While it had not been completed that

night, it would be as soon as possible, and that he would not quit or rest until it had been completed. That is the message that Naomi then conveyed to Ruth when she said that “the man will not rest until he have finished the thing this day.” Just as God didn’t rest until after he had completed all of creation by the end of the sixth day, So Boaz was telling Naomi that he would not rest until he had completed all things that next day, or as soon as possible. We are not told whether or not Ruth told Naomi the little “add on” regarding the kinsman redeemer that she sought from Boaz. She probably did, otherwise, if it had only been a simple marriage proposition, there wouldn’t have been anything left to do. It would have been a simple yes or no.

## CHAPTER 4

### Verse 1-6

*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, and sit down here. And he turned aside, and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down. 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 4 and I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my 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 besides thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. 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. 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.”*

The city gate was where all legal transactions were concluded. It was the “city hall” of its day in both Israel and in many pagan states. We find for instance, that Abraham purchased the cave in Mamre for Sarah’s burial by legal agreement at the city gate of Hebron. (Genesis 23:10). We find many other places in Scripture where the city gate was the center of judicial dealings regarding criminal and civil matters such as in 2Samuel 15:2, Joshua 20:4, Amos 5:10, Deuteronomy 21:18-21, etc. This was truly a “transparent” governmental structure. The public could be present to witness all governmental and judicial activity that was going on, both for information, and to be witnesses, whereby legal actions were authenticated.

That is why we find Boaz at the gate with ten of the city’s elders, who would serve as both judges and witnesses to what he was about to do. Note also that this became a rabbinical custom, ten men had to be present before synagogue services could begin. Some suggest that Boaz may have been like a city mayor, and certainly was one of the more important elders. Apparently he had called the nearer kinsman who then appeared

on the scene. When they were all seated, Boaz explained Naomi's situation to them. In verse 3 Boaz speaks to this kinsman of Elimelech as their "brother." The word used here is "ach" which means "a brother (used in the widest sense of literal relationship and metaphorically, affinity, or resemblance) kindred, etc." Therefore we can say that Elimelech was not a biological brother to either of them, but someone who had been close to them like a brother, perhaps an uncle or nephew. It may not be too far afield from how we Christians consider ourselves all brothers and sisters in Christ. In verse 3 Boaz, tells the kinsman, that Naomi is going to "sellet" a parcel of land.

This seems confusing. If she owned the land so as to be able to sell it, why does she need someone to "redeem it for her?" If we understand this correctly, Naomi had claim to the land through her husband but did not actually "own" it as we would define "own". Women could not own land directly, but only through their husbands. Notice that her claim of ownership is stated by Boaz not Naomi. Since the land could never be actually sold in the irrevocable sense, the one who purchased it was obliged to return it provided he was paid its then current value, she needed a redeemer to buy it for her. That's why he might have married Ruth. In that age, men often had more than one wife. I suspect that if the nearest kinsman had seen this beautiful young maiden available to him, with no strings attached he could very well have married her.

Leviticus 25:23-28 lays out the Law of Redemption as it applies to any kin, not necessarily next of kin. Here we find that it is the nearest kinsman who would have first right as well as obligation to do the purchasing. That Naomi "owned" the land, seems a bit unusual. I believe that "owned" refers to the fact that she was the only remaining member of the family to whom it was originally given in perpetuity when Joshua parceled out of Canaan. We know from Numbers 36 that no provision under the original Mosaic Law had been given regarding a man's estate when he left only a daughter. When asked by Moses, God made an exception which provided a form of ownership for the daughter through her husband if she married, or had married a man from the same Israeli tribe. In Elimelech's case there were neither sons nor daughters. Only his widow.



Because we find her here about to sell the land, there must have been a custom that covered this situation, which I haven't found yet.

The Levirate Law, as I understand it had been written, was not applicable, because it applied only to brothers, and the need to preserve a dead brother's heritage. Under the Law, if I understand it correctly, a blood brother would have to have married Ruth in order for all claims on the estate to have been satisfied. There was no such brother. Obviously, as we see here, it seems to have been some other legal means through which, Naomi "own" the estate. That "other" legal means is this: Boaz bought the "lease" from the one to whom Elimelech had "sold it". Because Naomi was the only living relative, she had claim to it, but only through a union with a man of the same Tribe. Boaz realized that in marrying Ruth, their child would be the one the kinsman would marry, thereby legally owning the land. Notice how "cleverly" God negated any other possibility. Had "Naomi clauses" not been, with only the marriage requirement would have involved the nearest of kin. He might have married Ruth. In that age men often had more than one wife. I suspect that if the nearest of kin had seen this beautiful young maiden available to him, with no strings, he could very well have married her.

Now the question arises as to the worth of the estate, and what residual encumbrances might have been on it. Here I believe, is where the timing of the Jubilee year is important. As we learned earlier, the Jubilee probably occurred only a year or two before the famine. If so, from that perspective, when Elimelech and his family left for Moab was perhaps no more than five years after the Jubilee, making the land most valuable from that perspective, because the buyer could get as much as 45 years use out of it. That value however would have been severely discounted when they went to Moab, due to the famine judgment, caused by the thieving Midianites. At that time no one could have known when or if it would end. Now, ten years later in a stable and prosperous environment, the land, having yet perhaps 35 years of use before the next Jubilee year, was worth much more. As has been noted, at the end of the harvest season, if she did control the land, it could do her little good until the next harvest, and not even then,

unless she had sufficient funds to buy the seed, and hire the people who would work the land.

Being desperate, and desperately poor, she had to sell the land as soon as possible. The sudden coming on to the scene of Boaz as the kinsman redeemer was powerful evidence that God had restored his blessing on her and she no longer needed to be called Marah. Yet as we have seen, she didn't invoke that demand on Boaz, Ruth did, thereby forfeiting what might have been physically and emotionally a much better opportunity for Ruth, because she could have married some much younger rich man. This would have been a far more normal marriage where mutual love and romance would have been available to her. How wonderfully virtuous and self-denying each of these women were, as previously noted, but well worth noting again. Naomi's orchestration of Ruth's dealing with Boaz was only for Ruth's sake, that is to simply arrange her marriage to Boaz. Ruth added the additional "clauses" to the arrangement for Naomi's sake. As noted, because of age difference between Ruth and Boaz, it's likely that if she had thoughts only of herself and her happiness, she wouldn't have laid claim on him but instead chosen a man of her own age group.

Back to the land issue. What seems to be unknown is who had been using the land these last ten years. Getting back to an original premise, as mentioned in this commentary on chapter 1, Elimelech probably sold the land for what he could get for it perhaps in order to pay off debts and have enough money to get them into, and settled in Moab. It is likely that he fully intended to return as soon as possible when the famine ended. Perhaps he thought this would only be a couple of years or so.

But could she really have "owned the land"? In the case of daughters of Zelophehad (Numbers 26, 36), they as women, couldn't personally own any land. It became theirs only in the sense that it belonged to their husbands. I don't believe that there is anywhere in Scripture an example of a woman owning full title to land. Unless that culture had acquired some unrevealed new custom, I suspect that here Naomi was more of a temporary trustee of the land, as were Zelophahad's daughters until they married a

kinsman redeemer. Before we move on, let us be sure we know what a kinsman redeemer is. There are four requirements:

1. He must be a near kinsman.
2. He must be able to perform
3. He must be willing to perform
4. He must assume the entire obligation involved.

In verse 4, Boaz gives the closer kin the opportunity to perform, and if for any reason, he doesn't, then Boaz asserts that he will do it. Boaz's heart must have sunk when the man said he would do it. Then in verse 5 Boaz added the deal killer. The kinsman must also marry Ruth, the Moabitess, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. That was the whole package that Ruth had loaded on Boaz as a condition of their marriage. This was no small thing as one might think at first thought.

This, the kinsman was unwilling to do, probably for several reasons. While we do not know how much wealth it would require, the kinsman, seemed to have been willing and able to redeem the land. However, the marriage and all that went with it, was way beyond his willingness to perform. Apart from the need to marry a Moabite, that little phrase "to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance" was probably the most onerous of all of the associated requirements. This he admitted in verse 6 where we read "lest I mar mine own inheritance." In speaking of his own inheritance, he was most likely not speaking of what he might inherit, but what he would have left to leave to his own family. His stated reason seems to have been directed toward what "to raise up the dead upon his inheritance" would do to his estate. He may have had a son or sons to whom he wanted to leave his whole estate.

The kinsman who married Ruth was obligated to have a son" in the name of the dead". This son, according to Dr, Fruchtenbaum's research, would not only inherit a share of the kinsman property, as one of his heirs but, all of the property that he would have redeemed for Naomi would also go entirely to this son by Ruth, in order to perpetuate the line of Elimelech. This is because that son would legally be considered Mahlon' son. This

means his own current family would not only lose a portion of their inheritance to this son by Ruth, but all that he paid to redeem Naomi's land would be lost to his estate because all that Elimelech had owned, and was redeemed would also go to this son by Ruth. What we find here is not a direct application of the Levirate Law, because there was no brother, but what seems to be an extension of it as a clan responsibility. To describe this complex issue more simply in Dr. Fruchtenbaum's words "By buying back the land, the redeemer would not come into possession of the land itself, but would hold it in trust for his son by Ruth who would inherit the name and the patrimony of Mahlon. While Naomi had prior claim on the goel she surrendered it to Ruth."

#### Verse 7-12

*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 neighbor: and his was a testimony in Israel. 8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe. 9 And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's of the hand of Naomi. 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. 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 Ephrath and be famous in Bethlehem: 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."*

As mentioned in verse 7 and 8 this shoe business was an antiquated custom no longer used in most transactions. It had been symbolic, and related to someone transferring a possession or right to someone else. Here the near kinsman was in effect saying, "I pass this right to you Boaz, as you are the next in line." What a relief this was to Boaz! Ruth would now be his wife. Whatever the cost, it was worth it to him just to have her as his

wife. Scripture is silent regarding his private life. However, I believe that we can conclude that he was a widower without any children. Therefore there was no one else who would be deprived. Although he sired Obed, he would not be his son, because Obed would be Naomi's son as well as her kinsman redeemer.

After the nearest kinsman gave up his right or obligation, Boaz immediately reminded the witnessing ten elders that for the record, this day he had bought all that was required of a kinsman in this particular situation. Then in verse 10 he publically reiterates the whole obligation to which he had agreed in order to make it as official and binding as possible. In verse 11, all the witnessing people and the elders acknowledged the agreement and wished him extremely well. Verse 12 is a strange one, when we fully realize its significance. Pharez was born from what might euphemistically be called a Leverite marriage. Of course, the Boaz/ Ruth marriage was somewhat similar but in a far more God-honoring way. There is much to be understood regarding Pharez, as we seek to understand, the Book of Ruth and the ancestry of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. These matters are addressed in another study called "The Genealogy and Chronology of Jesus from Adam to David."

#### Verse 13-17

*13 "So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the Lord gave her conception, and she bare a son. 14 And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the Lord, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel. 15 And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter-in-law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him. 16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. 17 And the women her neighbors gave it a name saying, There is a son born to Naomi: and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David."*

This of course was a memorable time not only for Ruth, but I believe even more so for Naomi. The blessed Lord had not left her without a kinsman, in fact, she had a grandson who would effectively be her husband and her "nourisher" in her old age. The women

also reminded her that she also had a loving daughter-in-law “who is better to you than seven sons.” The redeemer here is not Boaz, but the son that had just been born. All that Boaz purchased on behalf of Naomi was affectually placed in trust for this son. Some day after Boaz’s death, this would all go to him. Thus the land would be back in Elimelech’s estate. Therefore, he, Obed, would be the one to redeem and perpetuate all that had been Elimelech’s as her “husband.” It would be his responsibility to care for Naomi in her old age. We see this expressed in the women’s observation that the Lord this day, that is the day of the child’s birth, had not left her without a kinsman. Thus it can be said that the child, not Boaz, was considered to be her kinsman (goel). This is the only place in Scripture where a child is considered to be a goel.

In verse 16 we see that ‘Ruth entrusted her son to Naomi and she became his nurse. The word for nurse here is “omenet” from the verb which means to be “firm”. It denotes “a guardian” or a “nanny.” It does not even imply that she was his “wet”nurse. It appears that the women named him Obed which means “worshipper,” or “a servant who worships.” It seems strange to read that the “women” named him, because it was customary for the mother to be the one who named her children, and not even the father (see Genesis 29). It is likely that the women were close friends of Naomi’s and the “naming” was more of a collective suggestion to which Naomi and Ruth agreed. The remainder of this chapter, and this book is a list of the ten generations beginning with Pharez, and ending with David.

To end this study here without delving more deeply into the whole of what it both suggests and offers, would be to deprive us of seeing its most informative message, as it relates to Christ Jesus as our Redeemer, and also how it provides insights without which portions of the Book of Revelation can not be understood. Portions of the genealogy of David and of course Jesus, also offer important insights as to how mysterious and loving are the ways of our Lord as He works His purpose thorough some of the most evil and ill-equipped people. Again, for some of this in-depth delving, see my commentary called “The Genealogy and Chronology of Jesus from Adam to David.”

## EPILOGUE and Footnote from the Book of Ruth

From this little book, aside from its beauty as a story of great love, and a snapshot of a moment in history that it provides, there are two themes, one of significant interest, and the other essential to our understanding of some vital aspects of God's plan of salvation. In it we are given a small segment of the genealogy of David, and therefore of course, of our Lord Christ Jesus. As I see it, what is given is in some ways like a remez that is a hint of something much deeper that ought to be examined. The second, the introduction of the Mosaic Law regarding a kinsman redeemer is a message of profound importance if we are to understand the Book of Revelation, and many of the prophetic allusions to the Son of God, whereby the divine plan as it pertains to salvation is revealed. This too as presented in the Book of Ruth functions, as a remaz because what it contains is only a hint of something much bigger.

Let us begin with what the Book gives us in terms of the genealogy of David. It starts with Pheraz and names what seems to be the entire list of his descendants that lead to David. Including Pheraz, David is recorded to be the tenth on the list. A number of scholars have noticed that there seems to be something strange about the list in terms of the number of years involved. For instance, from the conquest of Canaan in 1445 BC to David's birth in 1085 BC, amounts to 360 years, but there is only four generations listed during that period, namely, from Salmon to Boaz to Obed, to Jesse to David. That would make each of these men an average of 90 years old when his successor was born. This is possible, but seems highly unlikely.

The next question is, if there are gaps, that is if there is a name or two omitted, where are the gaps? Which of these men, had unrecorded descendants that if known, would have eliminated the idea of a gap, and thus harmonize the genealogical list with the respective years. In order to develop a better understanding of the issue, I was persuaded to start with Judah, Pheraz's father. This has led to a surprise that I could never have anticipated as we shall now see. I thought it best, if possible, to determine Judah's year of birth with

some reasonable degree of accuracy, since it is not given in Scripture. From this, it might be possible to estimate the date of Pheraz's birth, which is also not mentioned directly.

There are certain reliable milestone dates provided in Scripture from which much of what happened in between can be determine, or closely estimated. One of these is the birth of Jacob, which was in 1836 BC. Then we learn that Jacob was 77 years old when he went to Haran in 1759 BC, and married Leah. Leah bore him six sons the fourth of which was Judah. If we assume that Judah was born during the fourth year, than he was probably born around 1755 BC. Our next useful milestone date is when Jacob and his family migrated to Egypt to escape the famine and were reunited with Joseph. This was in the 1706 BC. As we can see Judah at that time could be no more than 49 years old. Here is where things get quite disconcerting in terms of how we may have previously viewed these matters.

In Genesis 46:12 we find among the 70 who migrated to Egypt, Judah and his three sons Shelah, Pharez and Zarah along with Pharez's sons Hezron and Hamul. What is troubling here is how much was "accomplished" in those 49 years of Judah's life up to his arrival in Egypt. He married a Canaanite, and had three sons, sometime after which he had Pharez by Tamar, also a Canaanite. Pheraz then married and had the two sons he brought to Egypt. As the story is told to us in Genesis 38 Tamar had married his first son, and then his second.

Then, when she realized that Judah would not let her marry his third son, she tricked him into making her pregnant from whence Pharez came. So what is the issue? We'll see when we examine what years went into the scenario. For all of this activity to make sense, and it must, because God's Word is inerrant, Judah must have been no older than 14 when he married, and say 16 when his third son was born. Let's say his first son was 14 when he married Tamar, and Onan the second son was 14 when he married Tamar a year later. Then at least another year must have gone by before Tamar in her frustration tricked Judah, after which Pheraz was born a year later. Then, lets' say Pheraz was 14



when he married and had two sons who, say two years later were in Jacobs's caravan that came to Egypt.

Let us chart this for clarity:

| Event   | Age of Judah |
|---|--------------|
| Judah born  | 0            |
| Judah Married   | 14           |
| Er born   | 15           |
| Er married Tamar at 14  | 29           |
| Onan married Tamar at 14, a year later  | 30           |
| Tamar tricked Judah 2 years later and had Pharez the next year  | 33           |
| Pharez married at 14 and had two sons by the time he turns 16. These were with him when he went to Egypt. | 49           |

It is evident that I made age related assumptions, which on the surface seem absurd. Of course, I did this so as to fit them all into the 49 years. However, how much deviation from fact could all of this be when the unyielding milestone dates demand that all of this happened by the time Judah was 49 years old? We need to conclude the age of maturity for marriage must have been quite young during this time period, at least for Judah and his family. In order to get on with our genealogy study, what we have established is that Pharez was born around 1722 BC and his son Hezron was born around 1708 BC. Of course we have no assurance that either year is accurate. However, given the above reasoning, they must be correct within a year or two, which is close enough for our purposes.

Scripture list the descendants of Pheraz in the lineage of David as Hezron, Ram, Amminadab Nahshon, Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David. Assuming Hezron's birth to be about 2297 AM and knowing David's birth to be about 2919 AM we see that there

are 622 years between them. From this we can see that the average age each might have sired his successor was about 77 years old. This doesn't get us anywhere, so now let us try to locate a couple more relevant dates within this group of descendants. Salmon was the fourth after Hezron. He married the Amorite Rahab sometime after the fall of Jericho, which was about in 2553. We determined this by noting that Moses was 80 years old when on that "self same day" 430 years earlier 75 year old Abram went into Canaan. (Exodus 12:41) We know that this was in 2083 AM therefore, Moses was 80, 430 years later, that is 2513 AM. It was 40 years later when Joshua conquered Jericho in 2553.

By 2559 the conquest of Canaan was complete and they began dividing up the land and assigning their portions to each of the 12 Tribes. It seemed reasonable that Salmon would have married Rahab at about that time, that is after he received his portion of land from what was assigned to the tribe of Judah. As we learn later, the property that Salmon received was in the Bethlehem region. There is no way to know when they had their first son, whom we assume to be Boaz. If Rahab was, let's say 20 when Jericho fell, she would have been about 27 when the land was divided up, and therefore a likely point in time for Rahab to have married Salmon. If so, then her first son might have been born around 2587. The bracket of time when they could have married could be anywhere from the year Jericho fell in 2553 AM, to say, 20 years later when she was at or nearing the end of her child bearing years in say 2573 AM.

Another approach to establishing the date of Boaz's birth, is to see what our study of the Book of Ruth told us. In Ruth we are told that it was in the time of the Judges and that there was a famine. The only famine recorded in Judges was in the time when Gideon was a judge. Adding up the years recorded for each of the judges, we find that the year Gideon ended the famine by driving out the Midians who caused the famine was to about 2771 AM. The famine began 7 years earlier. It's likely that Naomi and her family went to Moab during the second year of the famine. They remained there for 10 years. Therefore they returned to Israel five years after the deliverance from Gideon. This then would be in the year 2776 AM and also the year Boaz married Ruth. Having determined

that this marriage of Ruth and Boaz took place around 2776 AM and that he was at that time around say 80 years old, his date of birth would have been around 2696 AM. There is a difference of about 123-143 years between these two approaches for determining the date of birth of Boaz. However one chooses to modify the assumption in these two scenarios, the gap is still too large to be ignored. Therefore, the only reasonable conclusion that I have been able to reach, is that Boaz was not Rahab's son, but probably her grandson. If so, then this means that our Lord chose to remove from this period, one or more names from David's genealogy. We will in a moment see that is not at all inconsistent with Scripture. However, we know that divine rejuvenation was provided by God to Abraham and Sarah. God may have did the same for these precedents of Boaz.

Now let us take a quick look at the list of descendants from Boaz to David. There we have only Obed to Jesse to David. Having determined Obed's likely birth date as being about 2776 AM, the year after Ruth and Boaz married, then from Obed's birth to David's' birth amounts to 143 years. Therefore, the average age of Obed and Jesse when their sons were born was 71 years. This, while it may seem a bit old, is reasonable. Therefore there seems to be no compelling reason to assume that there may have been another son between Obed and Jesse. However, there is one interesting observation to be made here, one for which I find no sure answer.

Based on what we learn from the Book of Ruth, Elimelech was quite likely the owner of a fairly large portion of land and of course, Boaz was also very wealthy. Obed inherited all that Elimelech had and that Boaz had. This should have made him extremely wealthy. Yet presumably, just one generation later, we find Jesse being a poor shepherd with only a few sheep. (1Samuel 17:23) What happened to Obed's great wealth, so that it left Jesse to be a poor shepherd? Of course, we can easily come up with several possibilities. One of which I find to be most interesting, is that there might have been another son between Obed and Jesse, a real bad "prodigal" son whom God chose to remove from the recorded genealogy. This would bring the average age of these men down from 71 to 47, a more reasonable age to accept. I'm not at all suggesting that this is so. I simply find it plausible to accept in the context of the men's ages, and the "riches to rags" situation that

seems to be how this segment of David's genealogy ended up. We can't rule out the possibility that it was Obed that lost the family fortune.

Finally, let us see if Scripture justifies such "arbitrary" name removal as I have suggested as an answer as to how Rahab may have been Boaz's grand, or great grandmother. We read in Deuteronomy 29:20 that in some instances there can be men that God may curse such that, *"the Lord will not spare him, but then the anger of the Lord and his jealousy shall smoke against that man, and all the curses that are written in this book shall lie upon him, and the Lord shall blot out his name from under heaven."* That's pretty clear, and I believe that it justifies the above possibilities. It seems compelling that where chronology and genealogy seem to cry out for such a "blotting," that it did in fact happen. Another interesting case of "semi blotting" is found in the genealogy of Jesus as recorded in Matthew 1:16.

Semi seems appropriate in that in 2Chronicles chapters 21-23 there is listed a line of three kings, namely Ahaziah, Joash, and Amazrah that are not listed in the genealogy found in Matthew. Also the Matthew genealogy leaves out two of king Josiah's sons who are listed in 2Chronicles 36. All five of these omissions from Matthew's genealogy list were evil men, which by God's sovereign choice He excluded from Matthew's "official list". However, for the sake of providing a more complete and unbroken historical list of kings within the Davidic dynasty, God chose to keep their name and their doings in the Chronicle's of kings.

Our second endeavor in this epilogue is to examine the issue of a kinsman redeemer, and how it relates to our Lord Christ Jesus. First however, for those who may not fully know, let us make an attempt to understand as much as the Lord has given us to know, about who Jesus was and is. Of course all of us who belong to Him know that He's both the Son of Man and the Son of God. But how God chose to achieve this is a mystery that seems to be as unanswerable as is the nature of the Triune God Himself. Those like myself, who wonder about such things and seek answers that do not violate God's given scriptural truth, cannot help but put forth theories that seem to provide reasonable

answers. What follows in my own and hopefully God prompted “theory” regarding the matter.

As noted, Jesus was and is both all God and all man. The Triune Godhead is spirit, with only the Son portion of the Trinity having chosen to supernaturally manifest in the likeness of man on numerous occasions in the Old Testament. We find no evidence in Scripture that He ever again manifested in this manner after Jesus was born. However, Jesus is not a supernatural manifestation, but is instead a real human being conceived by God in the womb of a woman, nurtured by her, in the womb, and then, as her Son, cared for Him on into His manhood as any other man would have been. Normal man has a human soul-spirit, and if redeemed, has the Holy Spirit as a separate entity dwelling within him.

It is my opinion that Jesus has a soul, which is similar to that of all mankind, but not a spirit that is typical of man. The soul is that of His man-ness, that is it is like that of any other human being, while His Spirit is the Spirit Son of the Triune Godhead. That is what prompted Isaiah in chapter 7:14 to write, “...*Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel*” meaning God among us. There in Isaiah 9:6 he would say “*For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.*”

As we read these prophecies, it is quite obvious that they are speaking of the coming Jesus, especially if we view them in the context of the Whole Word of God. The virgin birth speaks of the uniqueness of Jesus as a Man. “A child is born” again speaks to this child Jesus as a Man, and a “Son is given” tells us that His Spirit is the Son of God, the spiritual Son portion of the Triune Godhead. There should be no doubt that these verses refer to Jesus the God-Man. Who else but Jesus could ever be called “God among us” and who else has ever, or will ever fit the description of “Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace.” The word “wonderful” is a translation of the word “pele” which can mean a miracle, marvelous thing, wonderful.

The word “prince,” as used here is from the Hebrew word “sar” which can mean “a head person of any rank or clan, lord, master, prince.” These other choices of translation only enhance the greatness of Him who is the subject of nearly every prophecy. A more detailed study of this phenomenon can be found in the Christian Musings study called: “How Do I Know That God is Really the Author of the Bible?”

Then the question arises: Why did God choose to “cleave” that is to cause to be one, the Man born of the woman, and God Himself in Person of the Son of God? Scripture makes the case that only through this Man-God, and His suffering, death and resurrection could any humans be cleansed of their sins so as to qualify for eternal life, rather than of eternal damnation. Only through His ultimate sacrificial act of love could God’s perfect justice be satisfied.

Sin is any thought, belief or action contrary to God’s will. Sin is so repugnant to God that if this divinely planned sacrificial payment by Jesus had not taken place all of humanity, everyone who ever lived or will live, would be doomed to eternal damnation. However, all who believe in Jesus’ sacrifice, and accept Him as their Lord and Savior, are assured exemption from that fate, and will spend eternity with Jesus and the Triune Godhead on the new earth that will come. (Revelation 21) In order to satisfy God’s justice, Jesus the Man had to suffer physically at the hands of evil men and physically die. As the Son of God, He also had to suffer the far greater spiritual suffering of having been made sin and while in this state was for the first time to have been separated from being a part of the Trinity.

Sadly, the above described scenario is viewed by most of the world to be absurd, and too ridiculous to be believed. From sinful man’s perspective this cannot be the only way to salvation. There must be a more sensible way for man to achieve salvation, if indeed there is a heaven and a hell. Since Adam and Eve, after they sinned, tried to hide their nakedness, man has chosen to seek ways to negate the effect of his sins through his own efforts and devices. The first two people lost the aura of purity and likeness to their Creator the moment they sinned. Once they recognized this loss, they knew only to hide

it from God, not knowing what He would do. Sin had severed the Spirit-to-spirit relationship they had before. So God caused the first shedding of blood by killing animals and made from their skins, clothing for the pair to use to hide their nakedness, and physically protect them. He removed them from the perfect environment for eternal life in Eden, and condemned them to the harshness and dangers of the world that their sin had caused.

Over time, man invented many false gods and false religions. Because our Creator God was too demanding, then molded for themselves gods that harmonized with the way they wanted to live. Today there are many man-made false religions believed in by billions of people. They promise an eternal life based on man's strength, goodness and efforts, while many even claim to be Christian. All require some form of works to assure salvation. Where the use of the Holy Bible is claimed as their authority, they all either add, omit, modify, or falsely interpret portions, of the Word of God to suit what they prefer to believe. In doing so, they are denying its inerrancy and its having been Authored by God. Only those who take the Bible seriously, knowing of its inerrancy and Authorship are able to seek and receive salvation which comes from faith and trust in Jesus alone, nothing more or less. Perhaps I've drifted too far afield from the main objective of this commentary. For those who are saved, and study Scripture seriously, much of the above is an unnecessary part of this commentary. However, for those yet seeking, or who are new in the faith, perhaps some portion of this might be useful.

Why did God choose to bring about salvation in this manner? Why did He choose a woman to conceive a mortal Son to be His Son that would be yet unique in His godliness and sin free nature? As already noted, I believe that in the womb, instead of infusing a normal man-spirit to the soul, He substituted in its place, the Spirit aspect of the Triune Godhead that is the Son of God. Of course, this fulfilled God's goal of having a God-man rise from the womb and walk this earth as man, preaching the message of salvation as only one with Spirit of the Son of God in Him could do with perfection. Many would say that Jesus failed in His ministry, given that He couldn't even convince the Jews, His brethren, of who He was, and how they could be saved. From the secular view point the

fact that His own people demanded His execution and that He, this so-called God-man did die and was buried, proves to them the falseness of who He claimed to be. Did all of this careful prediction and orchestration by God, end in failure? If so, doesn't that prove that neither God nor His Holy Bible are infallible? If you are reading this as a truly born-again Christian, knowledgeable in Scripture, you know there was no failure, it all worked out exactly as God intended it, and as Scripture predicted it would be.

Again, from the secular perspective, the whole thing is foolishness. If there is an all-powerful all-knowing God, why would He take such a convoluted, minimally successful way to try to save souls? Many believe that almost anyone could come up with a better and easier way for the saving of souls. As we look around, they believe they have, and most of the world has accepted this wisdom of man over the wisdom of God. The world's largest religions attest that. However, God anticipated this, as He has all things, when He said in Isaiah 55:8-9, "*8 For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. 9 For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.*" Then in similar vane in 1Corinthians 1:25 we are told that "*Because the foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.*" Of course God is neither foolish nor weak. For man to have so much pride and self-assurance is man's testimony that he believes himself better qualified than is God, who is the Creator of his miserable mind and soul. The obvious conclusion to all of this is that God's way through faith in the God-man Jesus, and His suffering, death and resurrection was, is and always will be the only way to provide salvation for sinful man.

The big question, which man has never been able to answer, except through God's inerrant Word, was very incisively asked by Socrates during a conversation with Plato. His extraordinary human wisdom manifested fully when he said "Perhaps a just God can forgive sin, but I don't see how." By this comment he identified this profound question. God's justice demands punishment for sin. To show mercy and to forgive sin would compromise His perfect justice. However, not to somehow forgive sin would in turn negate the fact of God's love for his entire creation, and relegate all mankind to eternal



damnation. Socrates never thought of how, by God Himself paying the price of sin, His perfect justice would be satisfied and at the same time His perfect love could provide the way to the forgiveness of sin. Had Socrates only known that just six hundred miles away, across a portion of the Mediterranean Sea, the answer to this question had already been provided by God Himself in the Great Testament that the prophet Malachi was completing.

As we inch our way through this study, it should be of interest to note that the word “redeemer” does not appear even once in the New Testament, although in Revelation 5:9 it is clear that the saints in heaven credit Jesus with having redeemed them. We find redeemer used 18 times in the Old Testament as the translation of “goal or gaal.” Each time however, it refers to one who physically redeems a kinsman or his property. The one exception that I have found is in Job 19:25 where Job says, *“For I know that my redeemer liveth and that He shall stand at the latter day upon the earth.”* Here it is clear that Job is speaking of both a physical and a spiritual redemption. What a wonderful testimony this is to the fact of what God had somehow placed in the hearts and minds of these ancient people. The belief of spiritual and bodily resurrection, and that the One who will do it, that is the Redeemer, will stand there with them in that “latter day.”

We find in the New Testament the words “redeem”, redeemed, and redemption, used collectively 19 times, but again no “redeemer.” They are all translations of one of three Greek words, which have in the meanings, words such as “ransom, purchase, rescue, deliverance, salvation.” What is surprising to me, is that only once, and that is in Revelation 5:9 have I found that Jesus is clearly called the Redeemer. Apparently, even though Jesus did the suffering that satisfied God’s justification of the sins of all mankind, the Divine Author chose, in several verses, not to call Jesus the Redeemer. There are several verses in the New Testament from which we must conclude that it is God the Father who provides redemption. Typical of these is Romans 3:24 *“being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus:”* 1Corinthians 1:30 *“But of him are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption.”* Ephesians 1:7 *“in whom we have redemption through*

*his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace;*” Colossians 1:13, *“who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son.”* Hebrews 9:12 notes that *“neither by the blood of goats and calves, but his own blood he entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us.”* Notice that none of these verses point to Christ Jesus as the One who provides redemption, that is the one who does the redeeming. Three times, it is God doing the providing through Jesus’ blood. In Romans 3:24 it is by His (the Father’s) grace, that is in Christ Jesus. In 1 Corinthians 1:30 it is of Him, (not by Him) who of God is made unto redemption. In Hebrews it is Jesus having obtained eternal redemption. This indicates that Jesus did not Himself provide, but instead obtained. From Whom? From the Father.

Also, the word “kinsman” is only found twice in the New Testament, and neither time is it applied to Jesus. The two places where “kinsman” appears in Scripture is in John 18:26 and in Romans 16:11. In John it refers to a kinsman of the man whose ear Peter cut off. In Romans it refers to Herodian, a kinsman of Paul. All of this came as a surprise to me, because of how comfortable it is for us “biblically knowledgeable” Christians to refer to Jesus as our one and only Redeemer. We are also very comfortable calling Him our Kinsman Redeemer. Given this clear lacking of any direct scriptural identifying of the word “kinsman” with Jesus, and the fact that except for Revelation 5:9, we are not able to directly connect Jesus to the word “redeemer”, how can we, with any confidence, use these words to describe our Lord Jesus as our Kinsman Redeemer?

I’m not in any way suggesting that to call Him our Kinsman Redeemer is not an excellent analogy for His God ordained role, for I fully believe it is. My only point here is that apparently Scripture does not provide any direct rigorously defensible case for referring to Jesus as the “Kinsman Redeemer.” Just as Isaac was only a type of Jesus on Mt. Moriah, so is a kinsman redeemer only an analogy for what is defined in the Old Testament. Am I splitting hairs” by making an issue of this? As noted, Scripture gives us no direct basis for calling Jesus our Kinsman Redeemer. That label has been assigned

to Jesus by man, probably by divine inspiration, but not by Scripture. I believe that it is an excellent analogy for us to savor as we think about our blessed Jesus.

Certainly, it was Jesus who suffered and died thereby paying the just penalty God's justice demanded before our sins could be forgiven. Therefore, He is our Lord and Savior. However, Scripture as best as I can conclude, based on the above references, seems to more often than not credit the Father God with being the One who redeemed and did so through His son Jesus. Going back to Isaiah 53, we find that it was Father God who rendered all of the affectual punishment on to His servant, that is the Messiah, our Lord Jesus. Then in verse 10 we read, that Father God speaks of the Servant as the One who will justify many for having born their iniquities. Justify comes from the Hebrew word, "taaday" which means "to make right, cleanse, justify (make righteous)." Here, because of the Father's punishment, the Servant (Jesus) will have the authority to justify many. To be justified is synonymous with being made righteous and therefore saved. However, there is no indication that redemption, that is, the payment of ransom is involved in the justification that Jesus will provide. We infer this based on other bits of evidence that Scripture provides.

What is to be understood from all of this "redeemer" analysis? I don't know yet, perhaps it is to help us realize that Father God had a greater role than we normally credit Him in the process which brought about our salvation. It is clear from the above quoted verse that the Father has claimed that to be so. As I write these words I am reminded of Ephesians 2:8 which tells us that "*For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God.*" Who provides the grace? The Father provides the grace that saves. That grace however is conditioned on our faith. Faith, in what or whom? The context of this verse makes it clear that the faith is in Jesus as the One, who suffered and died as payment for our sins. Even here we see that salvation is provided through the joint effort of the Father and the Son.

Finally, let us explore this analogy of Jesus as being a Kinsman Redeemer. As we learned earlier, Leviticus 25: 47-55 defines the law of redemption by a kinsman and the Book of Ruth provides an example of how it was applied. The similarities between Jesus and how He brought about salvation is what makes kinsman redeemer a fitting analogy. As so, it helps us to better understand Jesus' work. Let us first consider the idea of kinsman. Is Jesus actually our kinsman? Yes He is, in a very broad interpretation of the word. It is by virtue of the fact that He was born of woman and grew to be a flesh and blood Man, makes Him of the human species, and therefore a relative or kinsman to all of mankind. That is important in that it is all of mankind for which He made salvation available. Did He have to be a kinsman in order to what He did, that is to provide the means for our salvation? Yes.

He had to be a man so that He could suffer as both a man and as God. He had to suffer and die as a physical man and also suffer spiritually as the spiritual Son of God, in order to fully satisfy God's justice, against sinful man. How else could such a vicarious punishment be applied? The Son of God as a Theophany couldn't fulfill that requirement. That would be our eternal God Himself, manifesting in His incorruptible body actually dying, something that is not possible. It had to be a real man who had to die. It had to be an absolutely sinless man. Nothing less would do. But how could there be such a man? I believe that it could only be because this man, Jesus, while He had a normal human soul, didn't have the spirit of a normal man. He had the Son of God as His Spirit which obviously set Him apart from all other men. This is how He became the Son of Man, and the Son of God, the God-Man Christ Jesus.<sup>1</sup> Only Jesus that God-Man, the Lamb of God, could qualify, just as only He could open the book as noted in Revelation 5:6, 7.

Could there have been any other way to save sinful man from the punishment that God's perfect justice demands? Absolutely not, otherwise why would God have subjected Himself to such suffering? Remember, Jesus was both Son of Man and Son of God. The Man Jesus suffered the pains of what man did to Him. However, His Spirit was the Son of God and it was He whom God the Father caused to suffer. (Isaiah 53) This was

demonstrated on the cross, when the Son of God spoke through the mouth of Jesus, the Man, *My God, My God why hast thou forsaken me?*” This was not the mind of Jesus the Man that formed these words. It was the Son of God as the spiritual being of Jesus who was suffering the supreme agony of having been separated from the Godhead because He had been made sin. Therefore, for those moments, He could not be an integral part of the Triune Godhead. Of course man, in his great wisdom, can claim better ways for obtaining access to heaven. However, that wisdom is but foolishness in God’s eyes. Had there been any other way why would our Omniscient God have done it this way, where He Himself did the suffering. To believe that there might have been another way is blasphemy, as are all other religions that claim another way. As noted, kinsman redeemer as expressed in the Old Testament has to do with physical redemption, is a fitting analogy for Jesus and what He did spiritually. As noted, a kinsman redeemer had to meet the following qualifications:

- a. He had to be a kinsman, that is a relative of the one to be redeemed. Jesus as the Son of Man had that qualification.
- b. He had to be willing to redeem. Certainly this was the primary purpose for which Jesus came. His willingness was so great that He chose to die in order to fulfill that purpose.
- c. He had to be able to fulfill that obligation. In the Old Testament, being able to meant that the kinsman had to have physical wealth to pay off the debt, that is to restore the freedom and well-being of his kinsman. Being the God Man gave Jesus all of the wealth needed to fulfill the accepted obligation. It was the wealth of God Himself that was available for this purpose, through the Son of God Spirit that was the God part of Him. However, this was not a physical redemption, but a spiritual one. Jesus the Man suffered the tortures of man by which He shed His blood as the symbol of His physical life given. The God aspect of Jesus suffered spiritual separation from the Godhead, a suffering infinitely more painful than that suffered by the human aspect of Jesus. Thus the available redemption came about by paying this two-folded ransom, which satisfied the Father’s demand of justice.

August 12, 2013  
Sept 10, 2013  
December 1, 2015

March 29, 2016

I pray that this protracted wandering around our subject has in some small way succeeded in shedding a little light on the background of Jesus as being an Old Testament depiction of a kinsman redeemer.

---