

CLASS NOTES on RUTH -- Appendix number one

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INTRODUCTION

There are a number of Bible books that yield special insights when they are considered together as pairs. Genesis and Revelation have often been compared as setting forth the introduction and conclusion of major Bible themes. There are also some interesting parallels between Job, probably the first Bible book to be written, and Revelation, the last. Jonah and Nahum depict, respectively, the goodness of God and His severity. Ephesians looks at the Body of Christ from our viewpoint, with the Body itself in the foreground, while Colossians considers the same Body from God's vantage point in Glory, with the Head in the foreground.

Ruth and Esther as a pair. An appreciation for the book of Ruth will be enhanced if we observe some of its interrelationships with the book of Esther. In addition to the obvious fact that both books are named for women, consider the following parallels and contrasts:

--- The events in **Ruth** took place during the period when there was **not yet** a king in Israel, and "every man did that which was right in his own eyes" (Judges 17:6; 21:25). **Esther**, however, depicts a time when there were **no longer** kings in Israel because, even when they had kings, everyone was largely doing what was right in his own eyes -- kings and all. These two books, then, bracket the period of Israel's kings in a meaningful way.

--- **Ruth** calls our attention to a godly remnant dwelling in the midst of a sinful Israel, living in the land. **Esther** reveals the hand of God working, behind the scenes, for chastened Israelites who are outside the land.

--- **Ruth**, a Gentile woman, was brought into the land of Israel, married a Jew, and became great grandmother to a king, and ancestor to **the King**. **Esther**, a Jewess, having failed to return to the land of Israel when God had made it possible, married a Gentile and became a queen.

--- The Gentile, **Ruth**, was blessed, and became eligible for redemption, because she was kind and loving toward a Jewess undergoing chastening (Ruth 2:11, 12). Compare Matt. 25:34 - 36 and Zech. 14:16 -- where the Gentiles going into the millennial kingdom will be those who befriended the Jews during the Tribulation. In **Esther**, the Gentile, Haman, was cursed and judged (Esther 7:9, 10 with Gal. 3:13) because he was cruel to Jews who had undergone chastening. Compare Matt. 25:41 - 43 and Zech. 14:12 - 15 -- where those not friendly to the Jews will be excluded from the kingdom and abandoned to judgment.

--- In **Ruth**, Boaz stands as a type of Christ as the Kinsman Redeemer, delivering Ruth from the condemnation of the Law (as a proselyte, she was under the Law: Ruth 2:12; Isa. 56:6) through **payment of a price**. In **Esther**, Mordecai is a type of Christ as the One on the throne, delivering his people from the power of Haman, a type of the antichrist, through the **exercise of power**.

--- **Ruth**, a Gentile, was redeemed through a Jew. **Esther**, a Jewess (and her whole nation) were saved from a Gentile -- types respectively of Christ and antichrist.

OUTLINE OF RUTH

- Chapter 1 -- Ruth deciding (1:16, 17).
 Chapter 2 -- Boaz providing (2:8, 9, 14 - 17).
 Chapter 3 -- Ruth resting (3:1, 7, 13, 14).
 Chapter 4 -- Boaz working (3:18; 4:1 - 11).
 (Modified from the Scofield outline)

Or, to place the emphasis on the major theme:

- Chapter 1 -- Redemption needed (Elimelech's disobedience and death -- 1:1, 3 - 5; Naomi "empty" and bitter 1:20, 21; Ruth under the curse of God Deut. 23:3).
 Chapter 2 -- The redeemer introduced (his wealth -- 2:1; his concern 2:5, 11; his protection 2:9, 21; his provision 2:9, 14 - 17).
 Chapter 3 -- The redeemer sought (for rest -- 3:1; for protection 3:9; for love 3:10; for deliverance 3:12, 13).
 Chapter 4 -- Redemption wrought (as a legal transaction -- 4:1 - 10; as an act of love 4:5, 10 - 22).

There are several reasons why this vignette of life "when the Judges ruled" was written. Aside from the obvious theme that Israel is to be both the object of God's love, and the channel of that love to the Gentiles, there are many practical lessons found in Ruth that cannot be discounted.

We live in a day when there is a lot of talk about love, but little demonstration of it. In the description of the professing church in the last days (2 Tim. 3:1 - 5), the word "love" is found over and over, in various forms, but always in the negative. Men will become self-lovers, money *lovers*, pleasure *lovers* (more than *lovers* of God), and *non lovers* of good. Of real love there will not be a trace. The book of Ruth, on the other hand, uses the **word** love only once (4:15) where it is, of all things, the love of Ruth for her mother in law! Yet it is one of the most beautiful of love stories. Love is **demonstrated** in this book in almost every relationship of life:

- Ruth loved her mother in law (1:14 - 17; 4:15).
- Naomi loved Ruth -- and, evidently, Orpha as well.
- It is quite evident that both Naomi and Ruth loved God.
- Boaz and his workmen had a respect for each other which at least borders on love (2:4).
- The people of Bethlehem received the returning Naomi with love, in spite of the fact she had left them to face the drought, and had returned home (in bitterness) to share the abundance when the drought was over. They lovingly received Ruth also, although she was a Gentile and a Moabitess. Their "gossip" about Ruth was concerning her goodness (2:11).
- Even the "other kinsman" was treated with loving kindness.
- The love of Boaz for Naomi is evident, more specifically set forth than his love for Ruth (2:11; 3:17).
- It is inherent in the details of the story, though never verbalized, that Boaz and Ruth deeply loved one another.

The world around us, and even the church, has largely lost sight of the real meaning of love. The results have been devastating. At a time when everything, from international peace

movements to bumper stickers, advertises the need for "love," worldwide terrorism, legalized infanticide, child abuse, and shattered families abound. Paul describes real love in 1 Cor. 13:4 - 7. He assures us "love worketh no ill to his neighbor" (Rom. 13:10), but enables us to "serve one another" (Gal. 5:13). Therefore, adds the apostle John, "let us not love in **word** [only]... but in **deed** and in **truth**" (1 John 3:18).

WHY WAS RUTH WRITTEN?

Perhaps one of the main purposes for the writing of Ruth was to prepare the way for David to become king of Israel. The book was surely written after David had been anointed by Samuel **to be** king. Before this event he was merely a lowly shepherd and the youngest son in his family. Such status would not have given David the prominent place he came to occupy as the final figure in the genealogy of Ruth 4:22. Furthermore, it must have been written before he began to reign because the genealogy does not refer to him as "David the **king**" (as in Matt. 1:6), a respect which would surely have been accorded him if he were actually on the throne.

I see this as typifying the period between the anointing of Christ, at the beginning of His ministry (Matt. 3:16, 17), and His coronation (Rev. 19:16) -- apart from the Age of Grace which was still a mystery at that time (Eph. 3:5, 9). During these years he defeated Goliath (typifying the Cross), yet he was rejected by Israel's leadership (see Acts seven). He, later, saw a nucleus of followers desert Saul and identify themselves with him in his rejection (1 Sam. 22:1, 2; Heb. 13:13). He made "mighty men" of those followers who, incidentally, returned with him and reigned with him (compare Rev. 20:4).

What would be more likely than that Samuel, who had first anointed Saul and later announced his rejection, and who had anointed David to take his place, should seek to prepare the hearts of Israel to enthrone David when the time came? Israel needed to know David's background, to see him as a member of a family which had stood firm for the Lord during the dark days of the Judges.

There were also several problems, which needed to be addressed in such an effort. For example, Israel already had a king. Without making any direct reference to Saul, the book of Ruth should have reminded them that the Lord had already chosen the tribe of **Judah** as the reigning tribe (Gen. 49:8 - 10) -- and, while David was a son of Judah, Saul was a **Benjamite!**

Why, then, had Saul been made king? The book of Judges (probably written, or at least edited, by Samuel) gives Israel's justification (in their own thinking) for demanding a king (see Judges 17:6 and 21:25). But it also presents evidence that they did not **need** one. **God** was their unseen King who faithfully alternated chastening and deliverance as they vacillated between sin and repentance (Judges chapters one through sixteen), and God used Samuel to call Israel to task for demanding a king (1 Sam. 8:7; 10:19; 12:19, 20). Looking back much later God said, "I gave them a king in mine anger, and took him away in my wrath" (Hosea 13:11). Ruth, aside from portraying a family who recognized God's sufficient sovereignty over Israel (the name "Elimelech" means "My God **is King**"), establishes the fact that David was of the tribe of **Judah** and not a Benjamite, as was Saul.

But why didn't God put Jesse, who was of the tribe of Judah, on the throne until David

was old enough to take the post? The answer to this is found tucked away in chapter four of the book of Ruth. Significantly, the short genealogy does not begin with Judah himself (for whom the tribe was named) as one would expect, but with his son, Pharez. The reason for this is found in Deut. 23:2 (NASB): "No one of illegitimate birth shall enter the assembly of the Lord; none of his descendants, **even to the tenth generation**, shall enter the assembly of the Lord." Pharez was an illegitimate son of Judah. The genealogy in Ruth establishes that David **is** the tenth generation from Pharez and, unlike Jesse, **has** the right to enter Israel's congregation and, being a descendent of Judah, to reign as their king.

Another problem could stand in the way of David's acceptance by Israel as their king, he was a descendent of a Moabitess. In Deut. 23:3 a descendent of a Moabite, likewise, could not enter into the congregation of the Lord until the tenth generation. The release at the tenth generation does not help David here for he was only the **fourth** generation from **Ruth**.

Again we see why we must go back to Pharez in the story. The reason Judah had an illegitimate son was his failure to follow the **custom** of the kinsman redeemer (Gen. 38:7 - 18). In the book of Ruth the faithful carrying out of what had become the **law** of the kinsman redeemer (Deut. 25:5 - 10) is used to over-ride the curse of Deut. 23:3. The responsibility for marrying a Gentile and Moabitess did not fall on Boaz. It was Mahlon who was guilty of this trespass -- and he had already died. Ruth was now part of a Jewish family and, as such, came under the gracious provision of a kinsman redeemer.

As the law concerning the Moabitess was superceded by a higher law, invoked by the kinsman redeemer, so for the believer today the law of sin and Death must bow to the law of life in Christ Jesus (Rom. 8:2).

Another outstanding purpose of this little book was to prepare the way for the greater David -- Christ. A necessary part of Christ's genealogy is provided. It is picked up in 1 Chron. 2:11, 12 much later, but this book appears to be its source. In Israel, genealogies were not merely important, they were necessary. This is made crystal clear in Nehemiah 7:64. Priests were removed from the priesthood as polluted because they did not have a genealogy to prove they were Levites. The short genealogy in Ruth is used to prove both Christ's **legal** right to the throne through His foster father, Joseph (Matt. 1:3, - 6), and His **physical** right to it through Mary (Luke 3:31 - 33).

The typology found in Ruth (to be discussed later) is surely one of the reasons, in the mind of God, for its composition and inclusion in the Scriptures.

God had said, "The scepter shall not depart from Judah nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come -" (Gen. 49:10). When they were out of Egypt, Moses was gone, and they were finally in the land, Judah's descendants could at last have begun to reign. But the son of Judah, through whose line God had chosen to bring the Savior, was an illegitimate son. So Israel continued without a descendant of Judah on the throne until the time stipulated in Deuteronomy had run its course. God takes His word seriously.

If, as is claimed by many, Christ were not born of a virgin, He (blasphemous thought)

would be an illegitimate son of Mary. Deuteronomy 23:2 would keep Him, also, from the congregation of Israel and from the throne of David. Also, since believers are "counted to the Lord for a generation" (Psa. 22:30), they would be, spiritually, His first generation sons -- kept from the place of fellowship and blessing forever. How very important is the glorious truth: Christ was virgin born -- the **Son of God** with **no earthly father!**

RUTH CHAPTER ONE - Redemption needed

"When the judges ruled" (Ruth 1:1) Israel went through cycles of **sin**, the resulting **suffering**, eventual **supplication** to God, then His **salvation** from their plight. Underlying their sin was the failure to recognize the hand of God behind the judges He raised up. A sampling of their repulsive behavior when they were doing what was "right in their own eyes" is given in Judges chapters seventeen through twenty-one. The book of Ruth seems to be anticipated in these chapters by the repeated mention of Bethlehem. The hireling priest, "Father" Jonathan (Judges 17:10) was from Bethlehem-Judah (Judges 17:7). The concubine who was abused all night, and left dead on the doorstep in Gibeah, was also from Bethlehem-Judah (Judges 19:1).¹

By contrast, Ruth zeros in on this small but important village, later called "the City of David" (Luke 2:4), and assures us there was a godly remnant there who knew God was King (Elimelech's name means, "My God is King"). These believers in Bethlehem were not perfect, but they loved a perfect God.

A famine had been sent upon the land, probably as a chastening (Deut. 11:16, 17). Elimelech, Naomi, and their two sons failed to trust the Lord to meet their needs, and went to Moab looking for bread. God had pronounced a curse upon Moab "because they met not [Israel] with bread" when they were on their way to Canaan (Deut. 23:3, 4). Yet Elimelech left the "house of bread" (the meaning of "Bethlehem") to seek bread in Moab. The Moabites also had used their women against Israel to tempt them to sin (Num. 25:1 - 3). As late as the days of Ezra, taking a Moabite for a wife was looked upon as a serious trespass (Ezra 9:1 - 4). Yet Naomi's sons both married women of Moab.

The name "Almighty" in the Old Testament could better be translated "All-sufficient" (see the note on page 26 of the 1917 edition of the Scofield Bible). This little believing family failed to look to the All-sufficient God for bread and, as Naomi confesses (Ruth 1:20, 21), He provided the needed chastening. We see clearly, as the story proceeds, that the chastening was one of the "all things" worked together with their lack of faith by the All-sufficient God -- for their **good**. Naomi did not have Romans 8:28, but she did have the same loving God who gave that precious promise to us. How much Romans 8:28, that "soft pillow for a tired heart," could have meant to her!

What we know about the relationship of Naomi with her daughters in law is instructive. It is never easy for parents when their sons bring home unbelieving wives, nor is it easy on the wives. In this situation, aggravated by the deaths of the sons, Naomi demonstrated true godliness:

--- She accepted them as they were. She never referred to either of them as "daughter

¹The name "Bethlehem - Judah" was to distinguish it from another Bethlehem, in Zebulun. See Joshua 19:15.

in law." Three times she called them "my daughters." While Ruth is referred to as Naomi's daughter in law six times by others, Naomi four times called her "my daughter." She took them both into her heart and family without reservation, and loved them.

--- She evidently was a testimony by word and life to both of her daughters, or Ruth would not have made Naomi's God her God (1:16) and come to trust under the wings of the God of Israel (2:12).

--- She surely did not put undue pressure on these women to "make a decision" or Orpha would probably not have followed her as far as she did, nor even hesitated to turn back to her gods. When we try to take over the work of the Holy Spirit, and almost force a "decision" upon those to whom we witness, it can either lead to a false profession of salvation or drive them away altogether. It is our responsibility to faithfully witness by life and word (even in tears -- Acts 20:31) beseeching them to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. 5:20), to so speak that many will believe (Acts 14:1), and to fervently pray for their salvation (Rom. 10:1). But it is the work of the Holy Spirit to convict and convince them (John 16:8).

--- She did not blame her Gentile daughters for her plight. Instead she blamed herself, and grieved because they had been hurt (1:13).

--- When the hour of decision finally came for both Orpha and Ruth, Naomi did not berate Orpha for turning back, nor even mention to her, at this late date, that she was turning her back on Naomi's testimony in the home and going back to her idolatry. She did, however, make it clear to Ruth that to go on with her meant leaving the gods of Moab behind (1:15).

--- The power of Naomi's love for her daughters, and the life she had lived before them, is reflected in the moving reply of Ruth to Naomi's suggestion she follow Orpha back to Moab. The God of Israel is the focus of Ruth's stirring answer, but Naomi is its theme. "Intreat me not to leave **thee**, or to return from following after **thee**: for whither **thou** goest, I will go; and where **thou** lodgest, I will lodge: **thy** people shall be my people, and **thy** God my God: where **thou** diest I will die, and there will I be buried: the Lord do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part **thee** and me" (1:16, 17).

Naomi and Ruth enter into Bethlehem hand in hand and heart in heart. Looking back, Naomi realizes how much she had had when she left ten years before. At that time she thought herself empty because of the lack of bread, but now she realizes she had been full -- for she then had a loving and believing husband and two fine sons. Although she now sees herself as "empty" and "bitter," her greatest riches are yet before her. How little did she realize that the lovely daughter, walking arm in arm with her, will prove to be better to her than seven sons (4:15); that out of her chastening the All-sufficient God will provide a grandson for her, a king for Israel, and a Savior for the world!

Was it **good** for Elimelech to leave the "house of bread" (Bethlehem) looking for bread -- to not trust the "All Sufficient God" (*El Shaddai*) to meet his needs? **No**, it was not. And as a result he died far from home. Was it **good** that his sons marry Gentile women? **No**, and they, too, lost their lives. Yet God used the death of Elimelech and his sons to necessitate a kinsman redeemer for Naomi. God used Mahlon's marriage to a Gentile to find, redeem and honor Ruth, and give us this lovely portion of Scripture. God includes even the believer's sins in the "all things" of Rom. 8:28, for with our sins He works together His **chastening**, and by His wise and gracious over-ruling hand brings good out of it all. Should we then "do evil that good may come? **God forbid!**" (Rom. 3:8). While "The wrath of man worketh not the righteousness of

God" (James 1:20), He **IS** able to **make** even the wrath of man to praise Him (Psa. 76:10). Compare Gen. 50:20, and the whole thrust of Romans eleven. Read carefully Rom. 11:33 - 36 and worship Him anew!

RUTH CHAPTER TWO -- The Redeemer Introduced

A few minutes with Strong's Concordance in this chapter reveals a growing awareness on the part of these two needy widows as to who Boaz is. He is referred to as a **friend** in verse one and as a **relative** in verse three. In verse twenty it dawns on Naomi that he is **near** of kin (a blood relative) and, finally, the **next** of kin ("*goel*") -- in a position to be their **redeemer**. He continues before us as the kinsman redeemer (*goel*) through the rest of the book (except in 3:2). No doubt Ruth spent the rest of her life joyously learning to know him better and better.

Similarly, the blind man in John chapter nine first saw Christ as a kind and gifted **man** (v. 11), then as a **prophet** (v. 17), and finally he fell at the feet of the **Son of God** in worship and adoration (vs. 35 - 38).

How well I recall, as a young man, my mounting appreciation of Christ. From **A** savior to **THE** Savior and, finally, **MY** Savior, was a transition from religion to salvation.

Israel's experience with the manna runs the gamut from unbelief to full and complete knowledge of the Redeemer. Initially, in unbelief, they despised the bread from heaven (typifying Christ -- John 6:48 - 51), calling it "manna," meaning "what is it?" (Ex. 16:15). God demonstrated **His** high regard for it, and the Christ it typified, by putting it in a **golden** pot and **hiding** it inside the Ark of the Covenant in the Holy of Holies (Ex. 16:3, 34; Heb. 9:4). Christ told the Jews of His day, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven; if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever" (John 6:51). Finally, one of the promises made to the "overcomer" in Revelation two is, "I will give [him] to eat of the **hidden** manna -" (v. 17). The ultimate in our experience, too, is to share at last in the **Father's** appreciation of Christ -- forever eating of the hidden manna. Even now our greatest longing should be the same as Paul's: "That I may **know Him!**" (Phil. 3:10).

Although both Ruth and Naomi had personally put their trust in Jehovah before their arrival in Bethlehem, in their relationship to Boaz they were not "redeemed" until chapter four. Typically chapter two portrays the Lord's provision for those who "shall be heirs of salvation" (Heb. 1:14); those who, through their Scriptures, are being made wise unto the salvation they have not yet experienced (2 Tim. 3:15). The seventieth week of Daniel chapter nine is in view, with Israel (Naomi) returned from the dispersion (during the harvest time -- Rev. 7:9 - 14), but not yet experiencing the salvation referred to in Rom. 11:26 and described in Zech. 12:10. The genocidal attack on Israel at that time (Rev. 12:13) is not in view in Ruth -- that is typified in Esther. Not even the purging of the rebels from among Israel by God (Ezek. 20:38) is suggested. Instead God's care for the remnant that, though they are not yet "saved," are also not "rebels" is before us.

This aspect of the Great Tribulation period is seldom noted. Although it is to be the "time of Jacob's trouble," as we are told in Jer. 30:7, the verse continues, "-but he shall be saved

out of it." As were Daniel's friends, they are destined for the fire -- but it will only be able to burn away the ropes which have bound them, freeing them to walk with the Son of God (Dan. 3:25; Isa. 43:2). Speaking of Israel in these days, Hosea prophesied, "Behold, I will allure her, and bring her into the wilderness (see Ezek. 20:35 - 38; Rev. 12:14) and speak comfortably unto her. And I will give her her vineyards from thence, and the **valley of trouble** for a **door of hope**: and she shall sing there, as in the day of her youth, and as in the day when she came up out of the land of Egypt" (Hosea 1:15). Unable to buy or sell without the mark of the Beast (Rev. 13:17), they shall pray, "Give us this day our daily bread" and, asking for bread, God will not give them a stone (Matt. 6:11; 7:9). Isaiah foresees those who "see the King in His beauty," and go on to enjoy the millennial kingdom (Isa. 33:17 - 24), as being given protection, bread and water during the preceding judgment (Isa. 33:16).

Significantly, the first concern of Boaz was for Naomi, but he provided her needs through Ruth. Ruth was initially noticed and helped because of what she had done for her mother in law (2:11). In the Judgment of the Nations, those Gentiles ushered into the kingdom ask, in essence (as Ruth did -- 2:10), "Why have we found grace in thine eyes?" They are given the explanation, "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ... inasmuch as ye have done it unto the least of these my brethren [Israel] ye have done it unto me" (Matt. 25:34 - 40). Naomi was probably not fully aware that the provision was coming, not merely from Ruth's loving labors, but from Boaz, until the eve of redemption. At that time it was no more "handfuls on purpose" (2:16) secretly provided, but six measures of barley openly given and sent with the message, "Go not empty to thy mother in law" (3:17).

While it is no doubt true that Ruth and Boaz came to love one another, it is specifically stated that Ruth loved Naomi (4:14). It was **this** love which caused her to care so tenderly for her mother in law and, thus, to "find grace" in the eyes of the *goel* (2:10 - 12).

In seeing the interpretation, we must not miss the application! "The Lord God of Israel" (2:12) is our Savior and Lord, but also our Head (Eph. 1:22). Like Boaz with Ruth (2:11), Christ knew all about us before we even met Him (Rom. 8:29). We can sing, "I've found a Friend, O, such a Friend! He loved me e'er I knew Him -." We, too, have found grace in His eyes (2:10) -- a grace going deeper, for we were not Jewish proselytes (1:16; 2:12), but aliens from the commonwealth of Israel, dead in sin and without hope (Eph. 2:1, 5, 12). It lifts us higher, for we are not His intended bride, but members of His very Body, seated already in the heavenlies (1 Cor. 12:13; Eph. 1:20). We know of His wealth (2:1), and rejoice that He was willing to become poor for us that we might become rich (2 Cor. 8:9). We experience His might (2:1 -- and "Boaz" means "strength"), and can do all things through Him (Phil. 4:13). Rather than **glean** in His field, we are sent to sow, water and reap a glorious harvest there (1 Cor. 3:6 - 9). May we not be found in the field of another (2:8, 21, 22)! When we thirst (2:9), He is the Water of Life -- better than "the water of the well of Bethlehem, which is by the gate" (Ruth 2:9; 2 Sam. 23:15). In addition, His completed revelation not only satisfies our thirst, but cleanses us (Eph. 5:26). When we hunger (2:14), He is the Bread of Life.

Our physical needs, too, He has promised to provide (Phil. 4:19). While we may at times live "from hand to mouth," it is, as Hudson Taylor once said, "His hand and my mouth" ("He reached her parched corn" -- Ruth 2:14). Labor though we may, it is His "handfuls on

purpose" (2:16) which provide for us "exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Eph. 3:20). If we merely take in and enjoy what He supplies, we will have our eyes on the handfuls. If we realize they were left on purpose as a loving provision, our delight will be in the One who left them. Then we can sing from a full heart, "Once it was the **blessing**, now it is the **Lord**." There is not only enough to satisfy us (2:14) but enough to share (2:18)!

How wonderful is our heavenly Boaz! **He is altogether lovely!**

CHAPTER THREE -- Redemption sought

"Shall I not seek rest for thee?" Naomi asked Ruth (3:1). "Rest" is an illusive concept. For instance, the rest offered by Christ in Matt. 11:28 - 30 was not inactivity, but ordered and meaningful labor -- yoked to the meek and lowly, and infinitely loving, Savior.

What Naomi meant was made clear earlier when she expressed her longing for both Ruth and Orpha. "The Lord grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband" (1:9). It was not a prolonged vacation she had in mind, as the description of the virtuous wife in Proverbs thirty-one amply testifies, but a deep satisfaction found in the careful protection, loving provision and wise guidance of a godly husband.

If men are to be the husbands of one wife (1 Tim. 3:12), it is not physically possible for every woman to have her own husband (1 Cor. 7:3) -- for there are more women than men. Marriage is not the cure for all ills, or the assurance of a happy life, as our divorce courts testify. Sadly, not all men, even Christian men, are capable of providing "rest" for their wives. Also, Paul tells us there are some advantages to remaining single (1 Cor. 7:34) and some circumstances (1 Cor. 7:26) where it is better not to marry (1 Cor 7:8). Yet, having said all this, marriage still remains as God's normal, loving provision for a woman -- the very relationship for which she was created. How needlessly "restless" are some women today who have willfully spurned a God-given "rest" in the home to proudly fend for themselves.

To obtain this rest Ruth, in subjection to Naomi, carefully followed her instructions (3:6) just as, under the kingdom program, the Gentiles were to come humbly to Israel for instructions and guidance to find spiritual rest -- for salvation was of the Jews (John 4:22).

In our culture Naomi's plan seems strange, if not actually crude or bordering on the immoral. But consider:

--- In Ezekiel God recalled His choice of Israel to be His people and remarked, "When I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine" (Ezek. 16:8).

--- The word "skirt" in Ezek. 16:8 and Ruth 3:9 is the same Hebrew word translated "wings" in Ruth 2:12. The Pulpit Commentary notes that the verb in Ruth 3:9 is not in the imperative, but the affirmative. Ruth was saying, in effect, "You have taken me under your wing, now be my redeemer [*goel*]."

--- Ruth uncovered the feet of Boaz -- to awaken him silently without alarming him -- and lay at his feet, not by his side.

--- Ruth was commended for what she had done and was specifically acknowledged as a virtuous woman.

--- She was not sent home, but continued at his feet until morning.

But why, then, did he send her away before daybreak with the caution, "Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor"?

For one thing, her presence could be misunderstood and misrepresented, for sometimes harlots plied their trade on the threshing floors (Hosea 9:1). Her virtue was not in question, but Boaz was careful to avoid even the appearance of evil for the sake of her reputation.

Also it would be premature to announce an engagement at this time since there was a nearer kinsman to consider. Her desire had been declared and his willingness expressed, but there was work to be done before she could find rest in the home of Boaz.

Now, paradoxically, Ruth must **rest** -- so she can **find** rest. She must cease her activity, "sit still," and depend solely on the work of Boaz.

Spiritually, we find our rest in Christ. While Paul never says we are His bride, he does point out, in Ephesians five, many parallels between the husband and wife relationship, on the one hand, and Christ's relationship to His Body, the church, on the other.

To see the importance God attaches to rest, consider the typology in Israel's Sabbath. It was given to remind them that God had rested after the creation work was completed to perfection (Gen. 1:31). But God's rest was broken when Adam fell, and He could not rest until a way had been opened for lost men to be rescued. When rebuked for working on the Sabbath, Christ replied, "My father worketh hitherto [**on the Sabbath** -- as the context demands], and I work" (John 5:17). It was not until Christ had "by Himself purged our sins" that He "sat down [rested] on the right hand of the Majesty on high" (Heb. 1:3).

Israel, even when they kept the Sabbath (they were stoned to death if they failed to do so), did not enter into God's rest (Heb. 3:11), for that **creation** rest had already been broken. But, since the work of redemption has been finished, and God is satisfied with it, we who believe do enter into rest. We have ceased from our own works, as God did from His (Heb. 4:3, 10). We rest in a finished **redemption**.

How prophetic of Christ was Naomi's assurance, "The man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day." "**It is finished!**" rings out from Calvary. We rest in what He has done and then joyously take His yoke upon us as His co-laborers. Together we work to bring the news of redemption to lost men. Paul was in the jail in Philippi because he had taken the yoke upon him -- he was Christ's bondservant. But he **sang** there because he found His yoke was easy and His burden was light (2 Cor. 4:16 - 18).

The "rest" in Ruth came from the full payment of the price of a legitimate debt. So the price paid by Christ at Calvary was to satisfy the holiness of God for our sin debt. This redemption was wrought at the first coming of Christ (though it will finally be applied to Israel, **as a nation**, at His return -- Ezek. 20:42 - 44; Zech. 12:10; Rom 11:26).

There is another "rest" spoken of in the book of **Esther**. It came through the display of

God's power delivering Israel from Haman, the enemy of the Jews (Esther 9:16). No price was paid to him to deliver Israel -- his lot was the sword. So when Christ returns to redeem Israel from the antichrist, and other Satan inspired end time enemies (typified by Haman and those who were with him), He will come in His power, wielding the sword in fiery judgments (Luke 1:71, 74; Rev. 19:14, 15).

Taking Ruth and Esther together, we have the two comings of Christ, one to suffer and the other to be glorified (Luke 24:26): redemption by **price** and by **power**.

CHAPTER FOUR - Redemption wrought

Reaching back to Ruth 3:18, we remember redemption is totally the work of the redeemer. Like Ruth, we must "sit still" while He works to "finish the thing" (Heb. 10:12; Rom. 4:4, 5).

Even in this love story, redemption is seen to be a legal matter. The redeemer went to court (the elders chosen as judges to sit in the gate). The financial debt of Naomi was not repudiated as unjust, or set aside out of pity for the plight of these two widows. It was recognized as valid and paid in full (Ruth 4:9, 10). After the court session was over Naomi and Ruth could have sung, "Boaz paid it all, all to him we owe."

This truth, as it applies to us, is underlined in Romans 1:16, 17. Paul did not praise the gospel because the **love** of God, or even the **grace** of God, is revealed in it (though both are prominent there). He is not ashamed of his message because it reveals the **RIGHTEOUSNESS** of God! God is not merely a sentimental and indulgent judge, willing to over-look our guilt and set aside the penalty we deserve. In total righteousness He "established" the Law (only given to Israel, but bringing **all** men in guilty -- Rom. 3:19) by judging us guilty and setting the death penalty (Rom. 3:31). Then, having honored it, He set it aside forever by exacting its penalty in full from our Substitute -- Rom. 5:6 - 8.

When redemption involved **things** (Naomi's land), the other kinsman was willing and able to redeem. So also justice would be served if "the creation" (apart from man) would be taken out from under the curse, for it did not come under it by its own choice (Rom. 8:20). The creation bears no guilt. But, since the creation was subjected to the curse for man's sake, God has chosen to release it only when man's redemption is complete (Rom. 8:21).

But when the Moabitess (under the curse of the Law) was involved, the barefoot kinsman, though possibly still willing, was not **able** to redeem (Ruth 4:6). In typical application, the Law was willing. "The Law is holy ... and just and good" Paul tells us in Rom. 7:12. But the Law was not **able**. "By the deeds of the Law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight" (Rom. 3:20). "If the first covenant [the Law] had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second [the New Covenant]" (Heb. 8:7). However, the problem was not with the Law itself, but with sinful man. "- Finding fault with **them** [Israel] --" (Heb. 8:8).

The Law cannot "mar its inheritance" (Ruth 4:6) by compromising its righteousness. Christ, though, was willing and able to have His inheritance marred. He became poor for us that

we might be rich (2 Cor. 8:9). But He did more than this. He was **Himself** marred. As its author, His righteousness exceeded the scope of the Law, yet He not only took our sins upon Him (1 Pet. 2:24), but He who knew no sin **became** sin, that through His sacrifice we might be made the righteousness of God in Him (2 Cor. 5:21).

But, though redemption must be accomplished legally, neither Boaz nor Christ was legally obligated to redeem. Why didn't Naomi and Ruth **take** the shoe of the other kinsman and **spit in his face** (Deut. 25:9)? For one thing, he was not **unwilling** to redeem (Deut. 25:7, 8) but **unable**. More importantly, the provision made in Deuteronomy was specifically for the brethren who dwelt together (Deut. 25:5). Mahlon had lived in Moab, far from both the unnamed kinsman and Boaz. By leaving the land he had forfeited the right of his widow to this protection. Therefore the redemption of **Ruth** would be totally voluntary on the part of either kinsman. Necessity was not the motivation.

There is little doubt that the love of Boaz for both Ruth and Naomi motivated him. On the threshing floor Boaz did not say to Ruth, "Thou hast showed more **love to me** -" but, "Thou hast showed more **kindness [to Naomi]** -" (Ruth 3:10). It had been her kindness to Naomi which had impressed Boaz earlier (Ruth 2:11). If Ruth had been seeking romance, she would no doubt have looked for a rich **young** man (or even a poor one) -- but that would have left her mother in law without redemption (Ruth 4:5). So, by "following" Boaz, she was showing kindness to Naomi. This pleased Boaz, for he had a protective love for Naomi and a romantic love for Ruth.

So also it was love which motivated God to redeem. God's love for Israel (typified by Naomi) is clearly set forth in Deut. 7:6 - 8; Isa. 43:4; Jer. 31:3; Hosea 11:1; Mal. 1:2 and elsewhere. To deny God's special love for **Israel** would invalidate much of the Old Testament. To deny His love for **Gentiles** would render meaningless the book of Jonah and many other passages in the Old Testament (Isa. 56:3, 6, 7 for instance), the Gospels, the General Epistles and Revelation. This love for **ALL** finds its most far reaching and glorious, though unprophesied, expression today as He holds out His hands in grace to all men, without distinction, and makes up His mystical Body.

SUMMARIZING the TYPOLOGY in Ruth:

Boaz is a type of Christ as Israel's Kinsman Redeemer (and our Redeemer, by His grace), bringing redemption through the payment of a price.

Naomi typifies Israel: disobedient, out of the land, chastened, brought back, redeemed, and finding her greatest joy and blessing when she becomes a means of salvation to the Gentiles. Compare Ruth 4:15 - 17 with Zech. 8:13, 20 - 23.

Ruth does not picture the Gentiles saved through the fall and diminishing of Israel, but those brought to Christ through Israel's fulness (Rom. 11:12). It is not the casting away of Naomi, but her being received back, which results in the reconciliation of this Gentile woman (Rom. 11:15).

The only claim Ruth had on Boaz, as a near kinsman, was her relationship to Naomi. Can one imagine Ruth, if she were merely a lovely and beautiful Moabitess, coming to Boaz and claiming him as her near kinsman just because they were both descended from Adam?

While it has always been true that Christ, in His incarnation, would be related to Adam's entire race (a "kinsman"), with the call of Abraham a more restricted kinship came into being. "He took on Him the seed of **Abraham**" (Heb. 2:16) is the relationship in view from then until the introduction of the Body of Christ in Acts nine / thirteen -- a result of the temporary "casting away" of Israel in Acts seven (compare Romans 11:11, 15). Under the kingdom program Gentiles had access to Christ by establishing a relationship, through Israel, to Abraham. Now, conversely, we have a relationship to Abraham by coming to Christ (Gal. 3:29).

We must not read Paul's epistles back into Ruth. But also we must not fail to fully enjoy the glorious truths about Christ as the Kinsman Redeemer, instructive insights about Israel, or miss the godly principles of loving conduct so well illustrated in this lovely book. Is it **about** us? No --- (2 Tim. 2:15). Is it **FOR** us? **AMEN, gloriously so!** (2 Tim. 3:16).

--- William P Heath

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