

# CLASS NOTES on RUTH

## HISTORICAL SETTING:

The action probably takes place during the first third of the book of Judges. It was evidently written during the reign of Saul, after David had been chosen to be king, but before his coronation when he became not merely "David" (4:22), but "King David" (as in Matt.1:6). The human authorship is not revealed, but Samuel possibly penned it. It would be very interesting to think that Samuel did write Ruth. He was the one chosen of God to introduce David to Israel and to anoint him as their king. This book would effectively argue for David's right to reign, in spite of the fact that a member of the hated Moabite race (Ruth) was his ancestor. It would also provide the necessary genealogy to prove he was a member of the tribe of Judah, which had been chosen long ago to rule over Israel (Gen. 49:10; Ruth 4:17).

## GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING:

There is an instructive link between the books of Judges and Ruth. The story of Ruth is set in the small town of Bethlehem, in Judah. The last five chapters of Judges detail some examples of the disgusting behavior responsible for the chastenings of the previous chapters. The name "Bethlehem Judah" occurs seven times in these chapters (Judges 17:7, 8, 9; 19:1, 2, 18 [twice]). This serves to emphasize the contrast between the conduct of those who did not acknowledge God as King and those who did -- during roughly the same period of history and in the same small town. The fact that Bethlehem was chosen by God as the birthplace for His Son further justifies this concentration of attention on an otherwise insignificant village.

**To compare RUTH and ESTHER see Appendix # one and Class Notes on Esther.**

## OUTLINES:

### Modified "Scofield" outline:

- 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).

### Heath outline:

- 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. -- Redeemer introduced.
  - His wealth and might (2:1).
  - His concern (2:5, 11).
  - His protection (2:9, 21).
  - His provision (2:9, 14 - 17).
- Chapter 3. -- Redeemer sought.
  - For rest (3:1).

- For protection (3:9).
- For love (3:10).
- For deliverance (3:12, 13).

Chapter 4. -- Redemption wrought.

- Redemption as a legal transaction (4:1 - 10).
- Redemption as a love story (4:5, 10 - 22).

### THEME:

Broadly -- "The Romance of Redemption" (The title of a book on Ruth by J. Vernon McGee). Particularly -- Israel not only the **object** of God's love, but the **channel** of His love to the Gentiles.

### NOTES:

**1:1.** Elimelech left Bethlehem ("Bethlehem" means "House of **bread**") because he was **hungry!** Interestingly it was the "Almighty" who dealt with him and his family in chastening (1:20). The meaning of "Almighty" is "All Sufficient." Elimelech didn't trust the All-Sufficient God to meet his need for food, and ended up having Him meet his need for chastening.

**1:2.** "Elimelech" -- Contrast the meaning of "Elimelech" ("My God **IS KING**") with Judges 21:25, "In those days there was no king in Israel: every man did that which was right **in his own eyes.**" Compare Deut. 12:8. For Israel, as a nation, there was **no king** and nothing to restrain their actions (as illustrated in Judges chapters 17 through 21). For the believing remnant (illustrated in the book of Ruth) they recognized **GOD** as their King; hence the contrast between Judges 17 -- 21 and this book of Ruth -- both portraying the same era of time in Palestine. See also Judges 8:22, 23; 1 Sam. 8:7; 12:12 that tell us clearly that God WAS King, if they had only believed it.

**1:4.** In the genealogy of Christ (Matt. 1:3, 5, 6) the names of five women are mentioned. Two of them are mentioned by name in this book -- **Ruth** and **Tamar** (Ruth 4:12).

Two others, though not named in the book of Ruth, have a connection with the story related there. **Rahab**, the wife of Salmon, was the mother (or at least the ancestor) of Boaz, and **Bathsheba** was the wife of David -- who bore Solomon, the next man listed in Matthew's genealogy. The book of Ruth is the key to why these first four women are in the genealogy. There is one more woman in the genealogy in Matthew (1:16) who is there, not because she was a Gentile, under a curse, or involved in sin -- but because she "found favor with God" (Luke 1:30). Her name was **Mary**. She, being the fifth woman in the genealogy, brings the idea of **grace** into it, for five is the number of grace.

**1:9.** Compare 3:1.

**1:11.** **Not**, "daughter in law." Naomi never calls Ruth "daughter in law," but calls her "**daughter**" seven times (1:11, 12, 13; 2:2; 3:1, 16, 18). Ruth **was** called Naomi's "daughter in law" six times by others.

**1:13.** See verse 20; Gen. 50:20 and compare Rom. 8:28.

**1:15, 16.** Orpha returned to "**her gods**," while Ruth confessed that **Jehovah** was **her** God. Evidently Orpha was not a believer and Ruth was. Compare 2:12.

**1:16, 17.** The word "**love**" is used only **ONCE** in this book, yet the story of Ruth is a **powerful demonstration of it**. The word itself is found only in 4:15, where it has Ruth's love for her mother in law, Naomi, in view. Compare the book of Esther where the **word "God"** is not found openly even once, yet His **hand** is everywhere evident.

Notice the love of Ruth for Naomi (1:14 - 17; 4:15), Naomi's love for Ruth (3:1), and their mutual love for God. Boaz loved his workmen, and they loved him (2:4). Boaz evidently loved Naomi, his prospective mother in law (3:17), and, quite clearly, he loved Ruth, even as she loved him. The loving concern of these small town women for the two ladies returning from a time of chastening (the "gossip" Boaz heard about Ruth was all **good** - 2:11) is refreshing, as is the loving reticence in the narrative to name the other kinsman who was unable to redeem. Contrast the description of the last days in 2 Tim. 3:1 - 5, where the **word "love"** is used, in one form or another, six times -- with no love of God or real love of man anywhere indicated. Many who talk a lot about love demonstrate nothing but lust!

**1:16, 17.** Compare 2 Sam. 15:19 - 21.

**1:19.** Compare Matt. 2:3 where Jerusalem was "troubled" when **Christ** came to Bethlehem.

**1:21.** What a contrast here with Micah, in Judges 17, 18. He had all the things necessary for the idolatrous worship of his god, but when the religious equipment was gone he had **nothing** (Judges 18:24). Naomi, on the other hand, had lost everything -- but had the All-Sufficient God, a loving daughter, and a kinsman redeemer.

**1:22.** Ruth is referred to as "the Moabitess" six times and once as a "stranger" -- i.e. as a Gentile.

**2:1.** Notice the gradual change of the Hebrew words translated "kinsman" (or equivalent) in the King James Version:

- 2:1 -- "*Modah*" means "friend."
- 2:3 -- "*Mishpachan*" means "relative," ("kindred").
- 2:20 -- "*Garish*" means "**near** relative," ("near of kin").
- 2:20 -- "*Goel*" means "**redeemer**," ("**next** kinsman").

From 2:20, on through the book, the word used is "*Goel*." So our perception of who Christ is grows, as time passes, from a mere recognition that He is a friend, to seeing Him as our Savior, Redeemer and Lord.

Boaz was a kinsman of Naomi, not of Ruth. Ruth's only claim upon him, as a kinsman, was her relationship to Naomi. Surely this illustrates the kingdom principle, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22), and is not in keeping with the way Gentiles are related to Christ today. Compare Isa. 56:3 - 8 with Eph. 2:12 - 22 and other Pauline passages.

**2:4.** The "Capital versus Labor" problem did not exist in the fields of Boaz!

**2:8.** "My daughter" is a term of respect, but one that indicates Boaz was considerably older than she was. 3:10 also indicates the age difference.

**2:11.** He knew all about Ruth before she even met him. So Christ knows all about us.

**2:11.** The treatment accorded Naomi by Ruth is the basis for the concern of Boaz for Ruth. Compare Matt. 25:34 - 36 where the treatment of the Jews, during the Tribulation, is the basis for the acceptance of a great host (Rev. 7:9, 10) of Gentiles into the millennial kingdom. See also Zech. 14:16 which tells us of Gentile nations who are "left" from among those who "came against Jerusalem" and who will share in the millennial worship of Jehovah.

**2:13.** "Favor" is the same word translated "grace" in 2:2, 10. It occurs only these three times in Ruth, and always in regard to the attitude of Boaz toward Ruth.

**2:14.** "Come thou hither ... he **reached** her the parched corn" is translated, "Draw near ... and he **served** her roasted grain" in the NASB margin. She was evidently seated right beside him.

"- And left" is translated (by the Amplified Bible) "- and she had some left [for Naomi]." Also in 2:18 "- she showed her mother-in-law what she had gleaned, and brought forth and gave her the food she had reserved after she was satisfied." Naomi ate that which Ruth brought home ("bring home" as the Filipinos would say). What tender love she had for Naomi! Also -- when Christ provides for us (compare 2:14) there is enough to **satisfy** and to **share!** In John 6:12 (after the feeding of the 5,000) it says, "When they were filled, He said unto His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, that nothing be lost.'" Just because it "came easy" is no reason to waste it. The Lord gives enough to satisfy and to share.

**2:16.** In Deut. 24:19 the farmers were told, "When thou cuttest down thy harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow -." That was a gracious provision. But Ruth enjoyed **abounding** grace, for the sheaves were left behind **on purpose**, just for her!

Ruth was living "from hand to mouth" -- but it was **Boaz's** hand and **her** mouth! If Ruth just took in and enjoyed the provision, her delight would be in the handfuls. If she realized they were left **on purpose**, as a loving provision, her delight would be in the one who left them. When we see the **loving purpose** in our provision from the Lord we can say, "Once it was the **blessing**, now it is the **Lord!**" (From a hymn by A.B. Simpson)

**2:17.** Boaz provided for Naomi before the redemption was accomplished. Compare Joseph providing for his father and his brothers before his brothers were reconciled to him (Genesis chapters 42 through 44). Compare Heb. 1:14 -- "them who **shall be** heirs of salvation."

**2:20.** The expressions "near of kin," "kinsman," "kindred," etc. occur 17 times in this book.

**2:22.** Just as Naomi counseled Ruth to look to Boaz alone for her needs, so we should

look to Christ alone. No one should ever find us gleaning in some one else's field. The NASB translates this verse, "- lest any **fall upon you** in another field." According to this rendering, Naomi may have had in mind the wickedness present, even in the small towns, during the time of the Judges.

**2:23.** The barley harvest is about the end of March. The wheat harvest is the end of May or the beginning of June -- Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown Commentary.

**3:1.** That is, Naomi intended to seek a husband for Ruth. Compare 1:9, "The Lord grant that ye may find **rest**, each of you in the house of her **husband**."

**3:5, 6.** Redemption for Ruth depended on her doing what Naomi told her to do. This illustrates the rule under the kingdom program, "Salvation is of the Jews" (John 4:22).

**3:9.** This was not an unladylike thing for her to do. It was, evidently, culturally right. Compare Ezekiel 16:8 where God describes **His** "courting" of Israel in similar terms. (Among the Ata tribes people in the Philippines, if a young man merely sits beside a young woman, they are engaged!) There was no immorality involved here (3:11). The reason for Boaz telling her not to let anyone know a woman had been on the threshing floor was two-fold: First of all, the other men who were there (in light of the evil of those days) might misinterpret what had been done. In Hosea 9:1 (NASB) the prophet refers to a shameful situation when Israel had "played the harlot, forsaking their God. [They had] loved harlot's earnings on every threshing floor." Secondly, the "engagement" could not be announced until the other kinsman was given his chance to marry Ruth, and the redemption had been accomplished.

**3:10.** The kindness shown was a kindness to Naomi. Ruth was not thinking of herself (looking for a **young** man) but of the needed redemption for Naomi's inheritance. See 4:15.

**3:16.** This should be translated, "- How did it go, my daughter?" as it is in the NASB.

**3:17.** Here we see, again, the concern of Boaz for Naomi.

**3:18.** Ruth was a good worker, but she must not work now. She must rest and depend on the work of Boaz. Praise the Lord, our heavenly Boaz has **FINISHED** the work (John 19:30). See John 5:17, "My Father worketh hitherto and I work [in regard to countering the effects of sin]." See also John 17:4; Heb. 1:3; 10:12 - 14. Christ sat down because the work for our redemption was **finished!** Contrast the priest, Eli, who was sitting down because he was not doing the work! (1 Sam. 1:9; 4:13).

**4:1.** The gate was the court of law in those days. Compare Gen. 19:1 with Gen. 19:9. Lot was sitting in the gate as a judge.

**4:1 - 11.** Love is shown to the one who could not redeem. His failure to redeem was a shame to him (Deut. 25:7 - 9) and so he is not named. Also his shoe is not taken, and no one spits in his face.

**4:3.** "- Selleth a parcel of land -" is translated, "- **has sold** the parcel of land -" in the Amplified Bible. She sold it when she left Bethlehem ten years earlier. Now it must be bought **back** for her (v. 4).

**4:4 - 6.** The other kinsman was **willing** to redeem (v. 4) but **unable** to do so when he found out it involved marrying Ruth (evidently because Ruth was a Moabitess and under the curse of God (v. 6). Does this picture the law which was willing (Rom. 7:12-a, 14-a), but unable (Rom. 3:20; 7:14-b) because of the curse on those under the Law?

**4:5.** Boaz himself was half Gentile -- as his mother was Rahab the harlot (Joshua 2:3 - 22; 6:25). It is possible that a generation is skipped here and that he was **grandson** to Rahab, but if so it is nowhere mentioned in Scripture, and he would still be one fourth Gentile.

**4:6.** Marrying a Gentile -- particularly a Moabitess -- could evidently mar the inheritance. Boaz was willing to have his own inheritance marred for the sake of Ruth. Even so, Christ became poor that we might become rich. He didn't let the marring of His own inheritance keep Him from being our Redeemer (2 Cor. 5:21; 8:9).

**4:9.** Evidently he bought the land **for** Naomi and then bought it **from** her. He purchased Ruth (v. 10) by purchasing the land. In this way Naomi would have an heir to keep the land in the family.

**4:11.** "- Famous in Bethlehem." They didn't know **how** famous! He became the ancestor of David, Solomon and all the great kings of Judah, including Christ!

**4:12.** Reference to Tamar and Judah links this story to another (not as lovely) story of the application of the kinsman redeemer principle (Gen. 38:7 - 26). In regard to Tamar: **1.** She, too, was, possibly, a Gentile -- for Judah, himself, had married a Gentile (Gen. 38:2). **2.** The first "kinsman redeemer" (Judah's **son**) was **unwilling**. He frustrated the purpose of his marriage to Tamar by practicing birth control. **3.** In regard to the second prospective "Goel," the **father** (Judah) was **unwilling** lest his third son die as his brothers had. He promised Shelah to Tamar but did not intend to keep his promise. Gen. 38:11, in the Amplified Bible, reads, "Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter in law, 'Remain a widow at your father's house till Shelah my [youngest] son is grown;' for he thought, lest perhaps [if Shelah should marry her] he would die also, as his brothers did." **4.** This stands in direct contrast to **our** "Kinsman Redeemer." Both the **Father** and the **Son** were **willing** to carry it through for us. (The **law** of the kinsman redeemer was not yet in force in Genesis, but the **practice** was already a part of their culture)

**4:15.** Ruth was brought under grace and into redemption because of her love for her mother in law. See 2:10 - 12. "Why have I found grace ... I am a stranger." "It hath been showed me all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law ... the Lord recompense thy work and a full reward be given thee." Bearing in mind that Naomi is a type of Israel, notice how Jonah and Paul loved Israel, and were willing to be chastened (Jonah), or cursed (Paul), for her sake. But notice that God, too, loves Israel and longs that the Gentiles share that love. See Rev. 3:9, where "thee" refers to those who really **are** "Jews" -- possibly in contrast to those who are Jews

by birth, but not part of the "Israel of God" (Gal. 6:16; Rom. 9:6): possibly in contrast to Gentiles who try to steal Israel's promises, and live under her law.

**4:14 - 17.** Naomi is no longer "empty" and "bitter." Her greatest blessing came when she **became** a blessing to a Gentile. So it will be with Israel.

**4:22.** The book of Ruth prepares the way for David's kingship.

**4:22.** Chapter four, where the redemption takes place, begins in the court of law (the gate) and ends in the court of the king (David). We have been redeemed in righteousness, to the full satisfaction of the law, and are now seated at His right hand in the glorious court of the King, in heaven itself!

### **TYPOLOGY IN RUTH:**

#### **NAOMI a type:**

Of Israel; disobedient, out of the land, chastened, brought back, redeemed, and finding her greatest joy and blessing when she becomes a means of salvation for Gentiles (See Ruth 4:15, 16 with Zech. 8:13, 20 - 23).

#### **RUTH a type:**

Of Gentiles won to Christ by Israel after this Age of Grace is past. She is **NOT** a type (though, in some respects, an illustration perhaps) of the Church of this age. Notice the contrasts:

-- **Ruth** brought into contact with the **KINSMAN** redeemer **WHEN** Naomi turns **to** the Lord (1:6) and returns to the land (1:22).

\*\* The **CHURCH** was brought into contact with the **REDEEMER** (**NOT** a kinsman) **WHEN** Israel turned **from** the Lord (Acts 13:45m, 46) and was scattered among the nations (1 Thess. 2:15, 16. The "wrath" resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 ad. and the present world-wide dispersion of Israel).

-- **Ruth** was won through the testimony of Naomi (1:16; 2:12).

\*\* The **CHURCH** was won through the disobedience and fall of Israel (Rom. 11:11).

-- **Ruth** had to be related to **Naomi** before she had any claim upon the **KINSMAN** redeemer (3:2, 9, 12).

\*\* Those in the **CHURCH** come to Christ **not** as kinsmen of **Israel**, but as **ENEMIES** of **God** (Rom. 5:10), and they claim Him as the Savior of **sinners**, not as **Israel's** Kinsman Redeemer.

Ruth does teach us much about the personal relationship of Christ to individual believers today however. The book is blessedly **for** us even though it is not **about** us. Also many of the things typified by Boaz are horizontal truth, as good for us as for Israel.

#### **BOAZ a type -- of CHRIST:**

-- Boaz a kinsman of Naomi -- Christ a kinsman of Israel (Heb. 2:16).

-- Boaz was only half Jew -- Christ related to Israel only on His mother's side: His Father was not a Jew -- He was **GOD**.

- Boaz was rich (Ruth 2:1) -- Christ was rich (2 Cor. 8:9).
- Boaz was willing to pay the price to redeem Naomi and Ruth (Ruth 4:9) -- Christ paid the price to redeem us (2 Cor. 8:9; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19).
- Boaz was mighty (Ruth 2:1) -- Christ was mighty (Isa. 9:6).
- Boaz loved Ruth -- Christ loved us (Rom. 5:8).
- Boaz was willing to be the redeemer -- Christ was willing to be the Redeemer (Heb. 10:7).
- Boaz was willing to take the curse that was on Ruth (because she was a Moabitess) on himself (the thing the "other kinsman" would not do for Ruth -- Ruth 4:6) -- Christ was made a curse for us (Gal. 3:13).
- Boaz married Ruth -- Christ is the Bridegroom (John 3:28, 29). The Bride is not the church of this age, but probably the believing remnant of Israel, perhaps including the Gentiles saved through Israel and Israel's program and testimony.

--- William P Heath

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