

# Ruth





## **Week 1 (Ruth 1 & 2)**

### **Read Ruth 1:1-7**

#### **Mark the following words:**

Ruth, also pronouns

Naomi, also pronouns

Time references (Circle in green)

Geographical places (Double underline in green)

Lord (purple triangle, coloured in with yellow)

### **Ruth 1**

**1** In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

**2** The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there.

**3** But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons.

**4** These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years,

**5** and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

**6** Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the LORD had visited his people and given them food.

**7** So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.

#### **Who are the main characters?**

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#### **Why did Elimelech and Naomi move to the country of Moab in verse 1?**

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How long did they stay in the country of Moab, verse 4?

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Were Ruth and Orpah Israelites?

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What happened to Naomi's husband and sons in verse 5?

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How do you think Naomi felt at this point? Do you think she felt God had forsaken her?

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Application: Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like this?

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What is Naomi's one glimpse of hope in verse 6&7? What did she hear? And where will she go?

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**MOAB, MOABITES.** Moab (Heb. *mô'āb*) was the son of Lot by incestuous union with his eldest daughter (Gn. 19:37). Both the descendants and the land were known as Moab, and the people also as Moabites (*mô'ābî*). The core of Moab was the plateau E of the Dead Sea between the wadis Arnon and Zered, though for considerable periods, Moab extended well to the N of the Arnon. The average height of the plateau is 100 m, but it is cut by deep gorges. The Arnon itself divides about 21 km from the Dead Sea and several times more farther E into valleys of diminishing depth, the 'valleys of the Arnon' (Nu. 21:14). The Bible has preserved the names of many Moabite towns (Nu. 21:15, 20; 32:3; Jos. 13:17–20; Is. 15–16; Je. 48:20ff.).

In pre-Exodus times Moab was occupied and had settled villages until about 1850 bc. Lot's descendants found a population already there, and must have intermarried with them to emerge at length as the dominant group who gave their name to the whole population. The four kings from the E invaded Moab and overthrew the people of Shaveh-kiriathaim (Gn. 14:5). Either as a result of this campaign, or due to some cause unknown, Transjordan entered on a period of non-sedentary occupation till just before 1300 bc, when several of the Iron Age kingdoms appeared simultaneously. Moab, like the others, was a highly organized kingdom with good agricultural and pastoral pursuits, splendid buildings, distinctive pottery, and strong fortifications in the shape of small fortresses strategically placed around her boundaries. The Moabites overflowed their main plateau and occupied areas N of the Arnon, destroying the former

inhabitants (Dt. 2:10–11, 19–21; cf. Gn. 14:5). These lands were shared with the closely related Ammonites.

Just prior to the Exodus, these lands N of the Arnon were wrested from Moab by Sihon, king of the Amorites. When Israel sought permission to travel along 'the King's Highway' which crossed the plateau, Moab refused (Jdg. 11:17). They may have had commercial contact (Dt. 2:28–29). Moses was forbidden to attack Moab despite their unfriendliness (Dt. 2:9), although Moabites were henceforth to be excluded from Israel (Dt. 23:3–6; Ne. 13:1).

Balak, king of Moab, distressed by the Israelite successes, called for the prophet Balaam to curse Israel now settled across the Arnon (Nu. 22–24; Jos. 24:9).

As Israel prepared to cross the Jordan, they camped in the 'plains of Moab' (Nu. 22:1; Jos. 3:1) and were seduced by Moabite and Midianite women to participate in idolatrous practices (Nu. 25; Ho. 9:10).

In the days of the Judges, Eglon, king of Moab, invaded Israelite lands as far as Jericho and oppressed Israel for 18 years. Ehud the Benjamite assassinated him (Jdg. 3:12–30). Elimelech of Bethlehem migrated to Moab and his sons married Moabite women, Orpah and Ruth. Ruth later married Boaz and became the ancestress of David (Ru. 4:18–22; Mt. 1:5–16). Saul warred with the Moabites (1 Sa. 14:47) and David lodged his parents there while he was a fugitive (1 Sa. 22:3–4). Later David subdued Moab and set apart many Moabites for death (2 Sa. 8:2, 12; 1 Ch. 18:2, 11). After Solomon's death, Moab broke free, but was subdued by Omri of Israel. (\*Mesha, \*Moabite Stone.) Towards the close of Ahab's life Moab began to break free again. Jehoram of Israel sought the help of Jehoshaphat, king of Judah, and the king of Edom to regain Moab, but the campaign was abortive (2 Ki. 1:1; 3:4–27). Later, Jehoshaphat's own land was invaded by a confederacy of Moabites, Ammonites and Edomites, but confusion broke out and the allies attacked one another so that Judah was delivered (2 Ch. 20:1–30).

J. A. Thompson, "[Moab, Moabites,](#)" ed. D. R. W. Wood et al., *New Bible Dictionary* (Leicester, England; Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), 775–776.

**Continue to read Ruth 1:8-22**

**Continue to mark:**

Ruth, also pronouns

Naomi, also pronouns

Time references (Circle in green)

Geographical places (Double underline in green)

Rest (1:9)

Lord (purple triangle, coloured in with yellow)

Bitter/bitterly

8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.

9 The LORD grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.

10 And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people."

11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands?

12 Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons,

13 would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me."

14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

**15** And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law."

16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God.

17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the LORD do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

**19** So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?"

**20** She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.

**21** I went away full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the LORD has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

**22** So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

**Looking at Ruth 1:1-22:**

**What did you learn about Naomi:**

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**What did you learn about Ruth:**

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**Why does Naomi urge her daughters-in-law not to accompany her back to Bethlehem?**

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**Read Deut 25:5 below to understand what Naomi means in Ruth 1:11-13**

Deut 25:5

If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go into her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

**What did Ruth promise Naomi in Ruth 1:16-17**

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**Do you think, Ruth felt spiritually satisfied and content with the idol worship she grew up with? If she was spiritually fed, would she be willing to leave that behind and give up everything she was used to to know the God of Israel?**

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**Naomi's name means "pleasant". But how does she want to be named in verse 20?**

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Mara means "Bitter".

**Do you think Naomi was bitter against God? If she felt bitter against God, would she still want to go back to Bethlehem? Could this bitter indicate her 10 years away from Bethlehem was bitter? Do you think Naomi wants to get right with God, that she wants to draw closer to him?**

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**Look at verses 13, 20 and 21. Do you think the Lord is against her? Was her situation the consequence of bad choices her family had made in the past?**

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**Application: Have you ever felt God was against you? Perhaps because of wrong choices you or a family member made? What hope do you see in the story of Naomi so far?**

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**How did God make provision for the care of widows in the following verses: Exodus 22:22-23, Deut 24:17-22 and Lev 19:9-10?**

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**Look at the time phrase you marked in verse 22, when do they arrive in Bethlehem?**

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This is a time of plenty in Bethlehem. God is going to use this harvest to take care of two widows! God's grace is calling Naomi back home.

## **Read Ruth 2**

### **Mark the following words:**

Ruth

Naomi

Boaz

Redeem / redeemer (Red cloud, coloured in with yellow)

Time references (Circle in green)

Geographical places (Double underline in green)

Lord (purple triangle, coloured in with yellow)

Bless/blessed (blue cloud, coloured in with pink)

## **Ruth 2**

**1** Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

**2** And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."

**3** So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

**4** And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The LORD be with you!" And they answered, "The LORD bless you."

**5** Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

**6** And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab."

**7** She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

**8** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women."

**9** Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn."

**10** Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

11 But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before.

12 The LORD repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!"

13 Then she said, "I have found favor in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

14 And at mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here and eat some bread and dip your morsel in the wine." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.

15 When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her.

16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

18 And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied.

19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz."

20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the LORD, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers."

21 And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

22 And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted."

23 So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

**What did you learn about Boaz:**

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**How do Naomi and Ruth interact with each other? What was their relationship like?**

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**In verse 2, Ruth “happened to come” to the field belonging to Boaz. Who was guiding Ruth where she should glean? Did it really happen by chance?**

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**What do you learn about the way Ruth worked in verse 7?**

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**How did Boaz help Ruth in verse 8 and 9, and 10-18?**

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**In verse 10 Ruth refers to herself as a foreigner. She is constantly aware that she is a Moabitess and not an Israelite. How did Boaz interact with and treat Ruth, and why did he treat her this way (Verses 11-12)? How did he speak to her?**

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**Application: What can we learn from the way Boaz treated Ruth? How should we treat strangers and immigrants or refugees in New Zealand?**

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**According to verse 12, where did Ruth go to for refuge? Boaz knew Ruth's commitment and he encourages her by reminding her about her commitment.**

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**Application: Where do you run to for refuge when things are not working out? When you feel you are in a storm? Do you phone your friend? Do you go shopping or escape in a book or a movie?**

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**In verse 20, what does Naomi say about Boaz?**

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A redeemer is one who delivers or rescue someone by paying a price. Boaz was a kinsman redeemer, he was a special family representative, who had a specifically defined role in Israel's family. He was responsible to buy a fellow Israelite out of slavery (Lev 25:28); to make sure the murderer of a family member answered to the crime (Num 35:19); he was responsible to buy back family land that had been forfeited (Lev 25:25); he was responsible to carry on the family name by marrying a childless widow (Deut 25:5-10).

**How did Naomi respond when she heard about Ruth's day in verse 22?**

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**How long did Ruth glean close to the young woman of Boaz in verse 23?**

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## **Week 2 (Ruth 3 & 4)**

**Read Ruth 3 and mark:**

Ruth

Naomi

Boaz

Redeem / redeemer (Red cloud, coloured in with yellow)

Rest (3:1)

Lord (purple triangle, coloured in with yellow)

Bless/blessed (blue cloud, coloured in with pink)

### **Ruth 3**

1 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?"

2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.

3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.

4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do."

5 And she replied, "All that you say I will do."

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded 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 grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down.

8 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet!

9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer."

10 And he said, "May you be blessed by the LORD, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich.

11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman.

12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I.

13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the LORD lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning."

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

15 And he said, "Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out." So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city.

16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did you fare, my daughter?" Then she told her all that the man had done for her,

17 saying, "These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

18 She replied, "Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today."

**In Ruth 1:9 and 3:1 Naomi talks about the “rest” she wants Ruth to find. What do you think she means with this “rest”?**

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**What instructions does Naomi give Ruth in verse 3 and 4?**

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In verse 4 “Then go and uncover his feet and lie down” was an act of total submission, the role of the servant was to be ready for any command of the master, to be totally humble and submissive. Ruth came to claim a right from her redeemer.

**What was Ruth’s response to the wise counsel her mother-in-law gave her in verses 5-6? What does this indicate about Ruth’s character?**

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**How did Ruth introduce herself to Boaz in verse 9?**

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**Ruth boldly asked Boaz to take her in marriage in verse 9, “Take your maidservant under your wing”. Culturally it was a way to say, “I am a widow, take me as your wife.” How did Boaz respond in verses 10-11?**

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**What kind of reputation does Ruth have in verse 11? Is this focussed on her looks or on her character?**

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**Virtuous means to be strong, worthy, desirable or useful. Where does Ruth find her strength? Where did she run to for her protection (Ruth 2:12)?**

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**In verse 11 Boaz is willing to marry Ruth to redeem her, but what happens in verse 12? Is it that easy?**

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**What does Boaz do for Ruth in verse 15-17? Why did he do this? What does this say about him?**

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**What does Naomi say about Boaz in verse 18? What does this say about him? Is he eager to get this matter solved?**

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**Compare how Ruth and Naomi came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest (Ruth 1) to how things turned out at the end of barley harvest (Ruth 2-3). Notice how God worked on their behalf in amazing ways so far in the space below:**

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**Ruth did not know ahead of time how her life will end. What did she do? How did she act? How did she conduct herself while she was on this journey, unsure how her life will turn out? (Ruth 1-3)**

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**Application: What can you learn from the way Ruth acted for your own journey in life? What do you need to do? Who do you need to honor and trust?**

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**Read Ruth 4 and mark:**

Ruth

Naomi

Boaz

Redeem / redeemer (red cloud, coloured in with yellow)

Lord (purple triangle, coloured in with yellow)

Geographical places (Double underline in green)

**Ruth 4**

**1** Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, "Turn aside, friend; 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 down here." So they sat down.

**3** Then he said to the redeemer, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech.

**4** So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it."

**5** Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance."

**6** Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

**7** Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel.

**8** So when the redeemer said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself," he drew off his sandal.

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

**10** Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, "We are witnesses. May the LORD make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem,

12 and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman."

**13** So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son.

14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel!

15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."

16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.

17 And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

**18** Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron,

19 Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab,

20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon,

21 Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed,

22 Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

**What information did Boaz tell the other redeemer in verses 3 and 4?**

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**What is this redeemer's initial response in verse 4?**

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**Did he still feel the same after he heard he would also have to marry Ruth in verse 6? What is his reason?**

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**How did it work in former times in Israel to confirm redeeming, verses 7-8?**

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**What blessings do the people pronounce on Boaz and Ruth in verses 11 - 12?**

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**What blessing do the women pronounce on Naomi after Obed is born in verse 15?**

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**How did Naomi feel in verses 1:20-21? How does she feel in verse 15?**

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**The book started with a famine in Ruth 1:1, how did it end? How did God provide?**

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## **Redemption**

**According to Romans 2:5 and Colossians 3:5-6, what can sinners expect?**

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To redeem means to “free someone by paying a ransom price; to liberate or deliver.” Boaz could not ignore the law, he had to fulfil the requirements of the law to legally redeem Ruth. The Bible is clear that the whole humanity is a mess because of their sin. God cannot overlook sin because he is righteous and just. God’s law demand that sin and rebellion should be punished. Jesus took our place to pay the price for our sin. Redemption always costs something. In Ruth 4:9-10 Boaz purchased Ruth to be his wife. He paid a price to bring her into his family.

**How are we purchased according to 1 Peter 1:18-19?**

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Ruth got a new identity, a new status and position. Previously she was referred to as “Ruth the Moabitess” (Ruth 1:22, 2:6, 2:21). Now Ruth is the wife of Boaz. She is now accepted into the nation of Israel.

**How does Christ view us after we are redeemed according to Galatians 4:4-7?**

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God accepted Christ’s payment on our behalf. All we must do is have faith and believe that Christ died for our sins and it is only way to be saved, it is the only way we can be redeemed.

**Make a list of all the blessings we have because we have been redeemed by looking at: Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 4:30, 2 Corinthians 1:21-22.**

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**Redemption always has a purpose. Read Ruth 4:5, 10. What was Boaz's purpose in redeeming Ruth?**

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**What is Christ's purpose, and what is our purpose, in our redemption according to Titus 2:11-14?**

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Just like Ruth belonged to Boaz, we now belong to Christ because of the price He paid for us. We must rejoice and be deeply committed, enthusiastic and eager to serve God who redeemed us!

#### References

[www.workmanapproved.com](http://www.workmanapproved.com), Ruth Bible Study

Written by Yolande Brown