

Bible Study: Ruth

Introduction to the book:

According to 1:1, the story took place during the time of the judges. This was a 400-year period after Israel entered the promised land under Joshua and before there were any kings in Israel (roughly 1500 B.C. to 1050 B.C.). The book of Judges comes just before Ruth in our English Bibles and you can see from its very last verse what sort of period it was. Judges 21:25 says, *"In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what was right in his own eyes."* It was a very dark time in Israel. The people would sin, God would send enemies against them, the people would cry for help and God would mercifully raise up a judge to deliver them. Again and again the people rebelled, and from all outward appearances God's purposes for righteousness and glory in Israel were failing. And what the book of Ruth does for us is give us a glimpse of the hidden work of God during the worst of times.

Look at the last verse of Ruth (4:22) for a moment for context. The child born to Ruth and Boaz during the period of the Judges is Obed. Obed becomes the father of Jesse and Jesse becomes the father of David who led Israel to her greatest heights of glory. One of the main messages of this little book is that God is at work in the worst of times. God is always working out His providence.

There are times in our Christian lives when it is difficult to sing the Lord's song, especially when we find ourselves in strange and unpleasant circumstances. What we have here in this story is an reminder of an earlier period in the history of Israel, when a family, Naomi, in particular, found themselves at the mercy of a strange and difficult providence, when singing the Lord's song was very difficult indeed.

Even through the sins of his people He can and He does work His will. It was true at the national level. And we will see that it is true at the personal, family level, too. God is at work in the worst of times. When you think He is farthest from you, or has even turned against you, the truth is that He is laying foundation stones of greater happiness in your life. This book perhaps like no other in Scripture focuses peculiarly on the details of divine providence.

The writer of the book is unknown. Some have speculated that it was written by Samuel when he wrote the book of Judges. Others have thought perhaps that it was written after the exile to remind the people of God's provision during some of the darker times of God's people. Some have also speculated that the author was King David, himself, as he recounts a family history of what God had been doing to get him to where he was.

Ruth- Chapter 1

A. Prayer

B. Introduction of the entire book of Ruth

1. If you were to give me a brief overview of the book what would you say are its main themes?
2. Given what we have before us who do you suppose may have written this book? **The biggest cases, I believe can be made for David himself. This is David's grandmother...and at a time of great struggle in Israel we see God's continuing redemptive plan be carried out in history by telling us how God brought a pagan into the faith to become part of the family of God and continuing God's chosen seed.**
3. And why do you suppose that it came in line before I Samuel? **This comes before I Samuel because it is more associated with the events of the Judges than Samuel.**

C. Read Chapter 1

1. What was life like in Israel in the days of the Judges? **This was a 400-year period after Israel entered the promised land under Joshua. But before there were any kings in Israel (roughly 1500 B.C. to 1100 B.C.).**
2. What is ironic about this reference... *"In the days when the Judges ruled..."*?
 - a. **Everybody did what was "right" in their own eyes.**
 - b. **This period was known as a time of apostasy and instability.**
 - c. **You would have thought it would have been different...**
3. Why did Elimelech, Naomi and their sons leave their own country?
 - a. **Famine.**
 - b. Who brings famines on the land? **God does.** Why? **Lack of obedience of His people.**
 - c. Where did they go? **Moab.** Is there something wrong with them having gone to Moab?
 - (1) **It appears that there was. Whether they weren't on friendly terms at the time with Moab or just that he went there to get away from his country thus breaking covenant with his people...not sure but this "information" is not given without some sense of trouble.**
 - (2) **The grammar indicates that Elimelech was striking out on his own under his own authority. Deut. 23 seems to indicate that Israelites may have been forbidden from marrying Moabites...certainly if they did they would be kept away from the temple and their children would be excluded from the congregation of Israel forever.**

4. So Naomi suffers under the famine of God presence then apparently the judgment of God because of Elimelech's own hard heart in leaving and going into a "pagan" land...then her son's deaths perhaps for marrying "pagan" women. One grief after another...
5. What seems to be the reason for Naomi wanting to go back to Bethlehem? **It doesn't seem to be because her men folk are dead but rather that she had gotten word that the famine against Israel had been lifted by God. "the LORD had visited His people and given them food."** This seems to indicate again her faith in the sovereignty and providence of the Lord. It was now time to go back. The word "The LORD visited" shows up quite often in the OT and it usually means a return of mercy after a long period of apparent judgment by God or lack of closeness by God towards His people.
6. In verse 8 Naomi speaks of the loving kindness of God ("*May the LORD deal kindly with you...*"), that is, the Covenant love of God, a major theme in this beautiful story.
7. Look at verses 8-13. Why do you suppose the writer spends so much time talking about Naomi trying to get her daughters-in-laws to go back to their people?
 - a. **First, she speaks of God covenantal promises. She knows He is a good God even in hard times...she knows Him to be a loving God even though her husband may not have been willing to wait upon the LORD.**
 - b. **Second, the scene emphasizes Naomi's misery. In other words, Naomi has nothing to offer them. Her condition is worse than theirs. If they try to be faithful to her and to the name of their husbands they will find nothing but pain. "Don't come with me because God is against me. Your life may be as bitter as mine." This shows the contrasting of feelings that Naomi is exhibiting...not that different from us...one minute we can be praising God and the next wondering what He is doing to the point of "blaming" Him for our condition as if He is somehow vindictive.**
 - c. **The third reason for verses 8-13 is to prepare us for a custom in Israel which is going to turn everything around for Naomi in the following chapters. The custom was that of the KINSMAN-REDEEMER, in other words when an Israelite husband died his brother or near relative was to marry the widow and continue the brother's name (Deut. 25:5-10). Naomi is referring to this custom (in verse 11) when she says she has no sons to marry Ruth and Orpah. She thinks it is hopeless for Ruth and Orpah to remain committed to the family name. She doesn't remember, evidently, that there is**

another relative named Boaz who might perform the duty of a brother. There's a lesson here. When we have decided that God is against us we usually exaggerate our hopelessness. We become so bitter we can't see the rays of light peeping out around the clouds. It was God who broke the famine and opened the way home (1:6). It was God who preserved a kinsman to continue Naomi's line (2:20). And it was God who constrains Ruth to stay with Naomi. But Naomi is so embittered by God's hard providence that she can't see his mercy at work in her life.

- d. **The fourth reason for verses 8-13 is to make Ruth's faithfulness to Naomi appear amazing. Verse 14 says that Orpah kissed Naomi goodbye but Ruth clung to her. Nothing can get Ruth to leave. This is all the more amazing after Naomi's grim description of their future with her. Ruth stays with her in spite of an apparently hopeless future of widowhood and childlessness. Naomi painted the future black and Ruth took her hand and walked into it with her.**
8. Now look at verses 14-18. Orpah bids her mother-in-law goodbye but Ruth stays. What was Ruth giving up by staying with Naomi? Why?
- a. **First, it means leaving her own family and land.**
 - b. **Second, it means, as far as she knows, a life of widowhood and childlessness, because Naomi has no man to give, and if she married a non-relative her commitment to Naomi's family would be lost.**
 - c. **Third, it means going to an unknown land with a new people and new customs and new language.**
 - d. **Fourth, it was a commitment even more radical than marriage: "Where you die I will die and there be buried" (v. 17). In other words, she will never return home, not even if Naomi dies. But the most amazing commitment of all is this: "Your God will be my God" (v. 16). Naomi has just said in verse 13, "The hand of the Lord has gone forth against me." Naomi's experience of God was bitterness. But in spite of this, Ruth forsakes her religious heritage and makes the God of Israel her God. Perhaps she had made that commitment years before, when her husband told her of the great love of God for Israel and his power at the Red Sea and his glorious purpose of peace and righteousness. Somehow or other Ruth had come to trust in Naomi's God in spite of Naomi's bitter experiences. Here we have a picture of God's ideal woman. Faith in God that sees beyond present bitter setbacks. Freedom from the securities and comforts of the world. Courage to venture into the unknown and the strange. Radical commitment in the relationships appointed by God.**

9. Even in her misery what does Naomi once again acknowledge about God in verses 18-21? **At the same time she acknowledges God's sovereignty by speaking of His severe providence and she acknowledges her misery with what He has done. Naomi is right to believe in a sovereign almighty God who governs the affairs of nations and families and gives each day its part of pain and pleasure.** While she acknowledges God's sovereign right to do what he does, what is she neglecting to see in these verses? **In vs. 22 she says she went away full...in the sense of having her husband and sons which mean a lot in this culture though they were starving looking for food that is why they left Israel in the first place...and then she says she comes home with nothing...what is Ruth...chop liver? In her grief and wondering what lies ahead for a widow in that culture she is blinded to the signs of His merciful purposes. She is acting very much like her husband in that she speaks of God's sovereignty but she is not trusting in His sovereign protection and plan...just like us much of the time.**

10. What is significant about verse 22 in the scope of this chapter? **Look at God's sovereign provision for them. They are basically destitute with the men gone and God has provided for their return at harvest time which means they will be able to glean the fields as is the Law and custom in Israel.**

11. What does this first chapter communicate to you about God that you can use in your daily life?
 - a. **God the Almighty reigns in all the affairs of men.**
 - b. **God's providence is sometimes very hard**
 - c. **In all His works His purposes are for the good and happiness of his people.**
 - d. **If you trust the sovereign goodness and mercy of God to pursue you all the days of your life, then you are free... free to see, experience and to do God's will. . The book of Ruth gives us a glimpse into the hidden work of God during the worst of times. And so like all the other Scriptures, as Paul says (Rom. 15:4,13), Ruth was written that we might abound in hope.**

NEXT TIME: Chapter 2

Ruth- Chapter 2

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. After re-reading these 4 chapters again, if you were to sum up in a couple of words the overriding theme of Ruth what would it be? **If the answers is hope...then where does the hope come from...what is it based in? If the answers is love...same questions apply. Divine Providence is the “right answer” this time. Just like in Ecclesiastes, Solomon says that Providence is the answer to life’s dilemmas...so here you go. Divine providence is revealed in this book showing us how detailed God’s purposes really are in the day to day affairs of our lives.**
2. Why are Ruth’s words in verses 16 and 17 of chapter one placed among the most beautiful spoken in the entire Bible? **They are words from the heart with full knowledge of what she is giving up and seemingly a full knowledge of what she is gaining. These words convey a sense of commitment and love for the Lord and for Naomi that show us the depth of commitment that God expects of His followers.**
3. What do we know of Naomi from this book?
 - a. **She was a helpmate to her husband...following him wherever he went even to the land of Moab.**
 - b. **She was a true believer in the covenantal God...**
 - c. **She understood His providences (severe and otherwise)and she accepted it. She sees God humbling her ... “call me Mara.” As God sometimes does to all of us for one reason or another...not always associated with a specific sin in our lives. But her trust iis still in the One who is acting.**
 - d. **She has known extraordinary pain from this providence and it doesn’t deter her faith...really! Like Job she may wonder and question in her grief and loss, but the foundation of her faith seems to remain strong. People don’t just believe in God’s providence on their own...only through a changed heart is this possible.**
 - e. **She loved her daughter-in-laws without prejudice.**
 - f. **She had taught her daughter-in-laws all she knew of her God...that is the way it worked back then...Ruth’s language and vow, “Your people will be my people and your God my God.” came from somewhere...most likely this covenantal language was taught to her and she listen and God changed her heart through the Word of His power. The power of younger listening to the teaching of the older in the faith is important. She did something extraordinary in this day and age...she witnessed to her Savior...she witnessed to her LORD.**
 - g. **She was gracious in wanting them to go back to “their” people...**

- h. She could be considered by some as a meddler...doing things that we would say she shouldn't do...she put Ruth in some interesting circumstances. On one hand it looks as if she couldn't wait on God's providence ...much like Abraham did... on the other God's providence is STILL at working...ordering and giving meaning to all that was happening.**

C. Read Chapter 2

1. Even though you know how this "story" ends. Think a moment from the perspective of one who has never heard this story before. Just like Naomi and Ruth would be living it...one day to the next. How were Naomi and Ruth going to survive? How were they going to make a living for themselves? Look at Lev. 19:9-10, 23:22 and Deut. 24:19-22. Ruth says *"Let me go to the field and glean among the ears..."* **She is referring to the Law found in Leviticus and Deuteronomy that required that when you harvested your field, you would leave a certain amount of crop on the side of the field and the corners of the field and anything that fell along the way was to be left. You could not go and thresh the entire field for yourself. It was left for the poor. Very often it was widows who did this gleaning...that is widows without sons.**
2. But let's back up a minute, to the first part of verse 1. Even though the narrator is recounting this historical event from the perspective of the day to day of Naomi and Ruth he is letting us see from the beginning what lies ahead...God's plan in other words. Now before class, look at Leviticus 25 and then compare these first 3 verses, especially the first. What is the narrator helping us to anticipate that Ruth...to be sure ...is not as aware of? **The designation of Boaz as a "relative" opens us up to the whole kinsman -redeemer designation. The "go'el" referred to the next of kin who intervened to maintain the rights or preserve the continuity of the family...from avenging the blood of a murdered member of the clan to redeeming someone from the bondage of slavery to regaining family property for the family inheritance to marrying a widow to provide an heir for her deceased husband to maintain whatever rights or lands they may still have in Bethlehem. This is where Boaz comes in down the road of this story.**
3. What does Ruth know about Boaz at this point? **Ruth seems to know that Boaz exists, her mother-in-law has told her...but she hasn't told her much... and that he has a field in which she might glean...that he is worthy...which means a man of means in this context.**

4. With everything we have seen and heard up to this point, what is peculiar about the end of verse 3? **I only point this out because it is not there to confuse or contradict what has been said up to this point. The narrator has told us what they know of Boaz and here we see that there are things they don't know...like where his field is...it has been over 10 years after all since Naomi lived there. And the humor in the narrator...who is speaking for God, by the way...so God's humor is revealed in the nonchalant way he says, "She happened to come upon the part of the field belonging to Boaz..." Lucky?!? Coincidence?!? The writer says in the Hebrew... "As it turned out, she found herself working in the field belonging to Boaz..." What appears to be "luck or coincidence" to the outsider is actually God's providence at work. It is interesting to me that the narrator recounts this from Ruth's perspective...You can hear her now saying to Ruth...I was working through the fields and I just happened into the field of Boaz, our relative...and then you know what happened?...Boaz just happened to show up while I was there...**

5. Think back with me a minute to chapter 1:8. What did Naomi pray for her daughters-in-law? How does it seem that it is working out especially for Ruth at this point within the first 5 verses? **Prayers like these beg the question...Is God going to answer this prayer? ... How is He going to answers this prayer? As a new comer to this narrative you might find yourself saying...I know where this is going...and how that prayer is being answered. You see it is important...each part of what is said And what is recorded in the text...another reason to read over the whole book as we move forward so we don't forget how the parts go together. It is sort of like watching a good movie...the more times you watch it the more things come together and the more things you see that you didn't see before.**

6. What seems to happen next? **It appears to be love at first sight for Boaz. Even after he finds out who she is... Naomi's daughter in law the whole Moabite woman thing doesn't seem to be an issue. Ruth was hoping to meet this relative...but her main concern was to do her duty. So she goes and gleans. Her mother-in-law and her needed bread to live. And the law had given a means to meet her and her mother's needs for now. She did her duty and in the course of doing her day to day duty God begins to fulfill a promise. All of this impressed Boaz... who knew who she was and her whole story. He began making provision for her immediately. Provisions of food and her safety.**

7. The text tells us some things about the nature of especially the men during this time and the women that came to glean at the fields. Many of the workers were unscrupulous, drunks...day laborer types... that didn't have much to live for...remember this was the time of the judges when everyone did what was "right in their own eyes." Anyway it is obvious that the fields were not a safe place for widows not a safe place at all. Boaz refers to this a couple of times as well as Naomi close to the end of the chapter. Her life and her integrity obviously would have been in danger here. God gives us a glimpse at the fact that not all men were animals.
8. What does the text reveal to us about Boaz' character?
 - a. **He was a compassionate man- not only made provision for the poor but in no way made them feel less...He blessed them as he would anyone else...standard blessing when you meet people.**
 - b. **He was a faithful man...the blessing appears not only to be genuine but out of faith...it is using covenantal language...and is the salutation of the angels...the fact that he was upholding the law when many in Israel weren't was also a sign of his faithfulness. See also his speech in vs. 11-12..this is all covenantal language.**
 - c. **He is a worthy man...taking note of all that goes on in his town.**
 - d. **He is a leader among men...the men listen when he instructs them.**
 - e. **He is acting the part of the redeemer even before being asked or apparently culturally required.**
 - f. **He is one of the families potential redeemers...vs.20.**
 - g. **By his nature he reveals the loving kindness of the LORD that Ruth and Naomi were receiving from God.**
 - h. **He is also a smitten man...he is smitten with Ruth from the first. He seems to be a romantic as well...meeting all her needs within the decorum of the culture without being too upfront.**
 - i. **Boaz means in the Hebrew= "strength is in him"**
9. What does this text in particular but both chapters in general reveal to us about Ruth's character?
 - a. **She is loyal**
 - b. **She is a believer in the one true God**
 - c. **She is meek**
 - d. **She is gentle in her spirit...See. I Peter 3:3-5**
 - e. **She is a hard worker...self-starter... "I will go and glean" she didn't have to wait to be told.**
 - f. **She is probably attractive...something about her caught his glance at first.**
 - g. **She is probably naïve as to the ways of men... so much so that Boaz makes provision for her protection...or she simply had a duty to do and so she relied on God's protection in a bad situation.**
10. Why is Naomi so pleased in verses 17-23?
 - a. **God is with her again.**

- b. **God has provided food...lots of food...an ephah...about 30#s of flour for the first day... about 5 days' worth of flour.**
- c. **God is providing for her again through this "lucky" meeting of Ruth and Boaz and not only the meeting but also the way he has taken her under his wing.**
- d. **God has changed her circumstances in a very short time. We often wonder what God is doing in our lives and then something happens that put it all together... and boomall our worries are dealt with.**

11. What does this chapter communicate to us today about how God will take care of us?

Next Time: Chapter 3

Ruth –Chapter 3

A. Prayer

B. Review

1. How did Ruth just "happen to come" to Boaz' field? (See Prov. 16:9)
Lest we forget what this book is about after all...she came by God's gracious, sovereign, providence.
2. According to Chapter 2:12, why is God taking such good care of Ruth?
***"...under whose wing you have come to take refuge..."* Because she is God's in giving her good gifts. And because she knows from where her redemption comes she takes refuge in Him. The Psalms are full of this talk for us to take notice of. God is like that mother hen in the storm and we are the chicks taking refuge...we are not seeking refuge as if we aren't sure where it is we are taking refuge because we know where we will find safety from the storm in the midst of the storm.**
3. Why was Naomi happy as we came to the end of Chapter 2? **Because of God's providence...it had brought them this far and it would take them where they needed to be. Naomi sees God's light again. She didn't doubt that it was there she just hadn't been able to see it or feel its warmth for a while. "**

C. Ruth Chapter 3

1. In verse 1 what is Naomi referring to when she says, *“My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may go well with you?”* **Of Ruth’s need for a husband. Implying that it is her duty to remarry and seek to bear children and raise a family. See verse 1:9 (see I Tim. 5:14; Titus 2:3-5)** In our culture women might take offense at this but God’s will is that we be married unless He makes it clear by calling us to singleness. **This was not merely the meddling of a Jewish mother this was a woman of God seeking God’s best for her daughter...at least as far as she knew God’s will.**
2. In these first 5 verses we see things we are uncertain about even in our own cultural settings, let alone this one. Knowing what we know of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz what is it that makes us feel uncomfortable? **People being people...when put in a compromising situation it hard to say what they might do...so why tempt in the first place.**
3. Let’s look more closely at some of the phrases and words in these verses:
 - a. **Relative= kinsman-redeemer**
 - b. **Winnowing barley tonight- he didn’t have any problem getting dirty and helping out—revealing further his character**
 - c. **Wash ...and anoint and put on your cloak... no real reason to place anything more n this then the fact that she was filthy from the days work and she needed to present herself worthily before Boaz.**
 - d. **“uncover his feet” – much has been made about this as well... but the phrase is actually easier translated as “lift up the bedclothes that are on his feet” or “uncover the place of his feet” or “the foot of his bedding” whether that be a sack or a bench or an actual cot she would have been on the floor while he would not.**
 - e. **Either way you cut it the tension is going to be high when he awakes to be sure.**
4. If chapter 3 is the climax of the story, where precisely in chapter 3 do you think the tension is at its peak? Why? Where is the turning point?
5. Ruth follows Naomi’s plan almost to the tee. What does she change and why? **Vs. 9...she speaks to clarify to Boaz that she is not there for some unworthy meeting.**

6. What is it in her words that clarify for him her intentions...that takes this from something very questionable back to something righteous? (See Ezek. 16:8 for some reference in how God treated His bride to be.)
Naomi was bold in her own way...by getting Ruth to take this risk. Naomi can't be sure that Boaz will be completely honorable in the secrecy of the threshing floor that was known as a place that lacked discretion...like couple going to the barn. Specifically where does Ruth get the language "spread your wings" from in recent conversation and how might these words have helped clarify Ruth intent? **From Boaz in 2:12, when speaking of the one whom Ruth trusted. Was Boaz possibly communicating something more to Ruth with these words? Was Ruth taking a chance with interpreting in these words a desire on Boaz' part to be her husband? Ruth is even being bolder than Naomi...she is essentially asking Boaz for his hand in marriage by her actions as her kinsman-redeemer. She trust in God and now Ruth is saying that she wants to trust Boaz the same way. She puts herself under his wing, so to speak, and when he wakes everything hangs on one sentence and whether Ruth has interpreted Boaz correctly. Boaz had already been spreading his wing over her...caring for her needs and showing her favor that she didn't deserve.**
7. According to verse 10 what DOES Boaz understand about Ruth's intention?
8. What is the first kindness (hesed...covenantal love) of Ruth to which Boaz refers in verse 10? **The first kindness...or covenantal love shown by Ruth was her faithfulness to her husband and her mother-in-law specifically by staying with her.** What is the second kindness? **Choosing this middle-aged man for her husband.**
9. What character quality does Boaz highlight of Ruth's in verse 11 and why?
10. What is the wrinkle that presents itself in the midst of this situation of kinsman –redeemer? **There is another that must be checked with first... one that is older in the line of succession.**
11. How much barley does Boaz give to Ruth this time? **60 lbs.** What is the purpose of the gift? **Some have said that it was a gift to Naomi as a payment/ dowry if you will. Others have said simply that it was a gift in his haste not knowing what he was doing. And yet others speculate that if she was carrying a lot then people with filthy minds would not tend to speak when they saw her. Either way it is a message to Naomi that Ruth is loved and that she will be taken care of.**

12. Again what do we continue to learn about Boaz' character from these first 15 verses? **He could have taken advantage but he didn't...in fact, nothing sinful seems to enter his mind at all...instead he is struck by her kindness and love for him. He is an example to all men that just because they may have what appears opportunity...whether expressed consent or by innuendo our job is always to show restraint and defer to respect and honor the woman no matter what. He also could take advantage of the situation because of his love and side step custom but he trust in the Lord as well and knows that God's will needs to be done for all things to work out properly. He seeks purity and righteousness. One of the reasons this story is so "unbelievable" today is because we don't hold back from our desires so we figure that is true for everyone...but not here...not these 2.**
13. Can you imagine Naomi. She has waited up all night to find out what happened. After Ruth tells her and they separate the flour she makes it clear that they have done what God expected them to do and now it was up to God to work out the details. They were acting in God's will all along...within His sovereign providence and now like many things with God...they wait upon the Lord.

Next Time: Chapter 4... "The Rest of the Story"

Ruth –Chapter 4

- A. Prayer
- B. Review
 - 1. How does Boaz reflect Christ in his character?
 - 2. How does Ruth and Naomi represent all of God's true believers?
- C. Chapter 4
 - 1. What do you think of the way that Boaz takes care of this situation in verses 1-6? Why?
 - a. **The city gate is where you administered justice. If you had an issue of the law you would call the elders together to determine the correct judgment of the law. So Boaz is sitting there at the gate and he must know that his brother would come that way. It is Boaz' older brother who is the actual next in line kinsman-redeemer.**

- b. **Now Naomi has land that she seems to be wishing to sell to provide for her needs and, of course, the family has the first claim according to the law an obligation to take care of their family this way...financially... but also so the land stay within the family...the family would pay the going price.**
 - c. **This cannot wait... that is why he has called the elders together...so it can be decided today. Boaz and his brother discuss the case and how it needs to be resolved right away. Well. The brother being a business man says sure...a good investment. He seemingly doesn't know the twist this include...Ruth. What happens next is almost comical...**
 - d. **Boaz had placed these men here for a reason so that they would hear that his brother was willing to be the redeemer thus allowing his brother to fulfill his duty to the family...helping his brother keep his dignity before the elders. Next he lays out the fact that Ruth has to come with the deal...once again in front of these elders...so Boaz' brother is forced to make a correct decision to save face and that is the right he has to exchange his redeemer status. His brother does not seem to be as godly a man as Boaz but Boaz helped him do the right thing. He enables his brother to look good because he assumes it wouldn't have gone well in private...the land would of presented to big a problem for him or something and he may have dragged his feet...but here there is the elders to deal with.**
 ☺ ☺
 - e. **I love this from one commentator:** *“Mr. So-and-So backed away from the deal faster than a man faced with a coiled rattlesnake. What a moment before had seemed to be a ‘can’t miss’ real estate deal - taking care of an old lady in return for the long-term payoff of a field - had suddenly become an investment nightmare. If there were to be a child from the relationship with Ruth, the redeemer would lose the field and there would be no benefit to his own children and estate to compensate for the costs involved in taking care of Naomi and Ruth. In other words, Mr. So-and-So was interested in ministry to the poor only if there was a payoff for himself and his family. Costly ministry without any personal payoff? Forget it!”*
2. Does anything make you uncomfortable with the way this whole this is transacted from verse 1-10? What and why? **Where does Boaz get the authority to make such a transaction? It seems that this was also implied in the phrase told by Ruth of wanting him to spread his wings over her...that he would take care of all the affairs...it seems this is why Naomi told Ruth at the end of Chapter 3 to wait**
 3. What about the comparisons that were being made of Boaz and Ruth to Rachel and Leah and Judah and Tamar seems strange? Given the situations how can these stories be so celebrated? (Think Big)

4. The crowd says a normal blessing upon them in the midst of these 2 verses... *"May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem and may your house be like the house of Perez..."* What are they saying? What is its immediate meaning and its future meaning? **Hebrew for worthily=virtuously= "valiantly" which goes with the next word translated renowned= "famous"= ("proclaim your house as among the greatest houses in Bethlehem"). The house of Perez was a great house...larger in numbers of children and stature with more lands...bigger than his brother Zerah.**
5. What does verse 13 tell us about Ruth? (Something we haven't discussed about her up to now.) See chapter 1:4-5. **She had been barren. And that comes with a whole 'nother set of cultural issues we didn't discuss. But she is barren no more.**
6. Why do the women of Bethlehem congratulate Naomi rather than Ruth in verses 13-17? **What did Naomi re-name herself when she came back to Bethlehem and what did that mean? The story began with Naomi's loss. It ends with Naomi's gain. It began with death and ends with birth. A son – for whom? Verse 17 is the great destination of Naomi's long and twisted road.** Why do the women say a son has been born to Naomi? **"And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.'" Not to Ruth! But to Naomi! To show that it was not true, what Naomi had said in 2:21, that the Lord had brought her back empty from Moab because His plan was for her fullness as for all His children. And if we could just learn to wait and trust in God, all our complaints against God would prove untrue. Elimelech's house would continue...though she once thought the LORD had left her empty when He in fact had not.** Interesting quote on this story: *"The last of the central characters to leave the stage is Naomi - perhaps an indication that, all along, the story has been about her life...."* Sinclair Ferguson
7. Obed = "one who serves" (according to Josephus and Jerome) an allusion perhaps of how this "son" will serve his grandmother in her older age.
8. At her advanced age, what do you think the writer means by describing Naomi as Obed's nurse? **This is NOT the word or words in Hebrew devoted to wet nurse. This verb is applied to both men and women equally when talking about one who is a caregiver. She gets to be a caregiver for another son, if you will having a direct hand in raising him. Moses called himself this "a nursing -father" when describing the infant child that was delivered out of Egypt by God and placed in his care. It was used of Mordecai speaking of his bringing up Hadassah/Esther. Kings are called nursing father in Isaiah prophecy. Women are also spoken of as the nurse of a child long after they have been weaned.**

9. What is the writer doing by giving us the last 6 verses (17-22)? **The author now reveals the real reason for writing the story...Redemptive History. See Ps. 113:5-9. The story points forward to David. David points forward to Jesus. And Jesus points forward to the resurrection of our mortal bodies (Rom. 8:23) when *"death will be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor crying nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away"* (Rev. 21:4). But along the way we get a glimpse of that history: Nashon was a prince of Judah during the Exodus and later he begets Salmon who is called the father of Bethlehem in I Chr. 2:51 which would make Boaz a major player in Bethlehem to be sure. Matthew's gospel reports for us who Boaz' mother was Rahab (Matt. 1:5) What is significant about the fact that Boaz' father also married a "foreigner"?- another reason perhaps that Boaz makes little of the fact that she is a Moabitess as the rest of the town seemed to.**
10. What are the main lessons of this book? **There seems to be 2 main points... one lesser... one greater.**
- a. **The lesser point: The life of the godly is not a straight line to glory, but they do get there. In all the setbacks of your life as a believer God has secured your joy. The story of Naomi and Ruth is a series of setbacks and fulfilled promises of God that result in joy.**
- (1) In chapter one Naomi and her husband and two sons decide to leave their homeland in Judah on account of famine. Then Naomi's husband dies. Her sons marry Moabite women and for ten years the women prove to be barren. And then her sons die leaving two widows in the house of Naomi. God's judgment perhaps for their leaving "The Promised Land." Even though Ruth cleaves to Naomi, Naomi is found at the end of chapter 1 complaining against the Lord: *"I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty ... The Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me."*... but the chapter itself ends with a picture of God's providence in that the barley harvest was just beginning.**
- (2) In chapter two Naomi is filled with new hope because Boaz appears on the scene as a possible husband for Ruth. But he doesn't propose to Ruth. He doesn't make any moves. At least that's the way it seems at first. So the chapter closes brimming with excited hope, but also with great suspense and uncertainty about how all this might work out.**

(3) In chapter three Naomi and Ruth make a risky move in the middle of the night. Ruth goes to Boaz on the threshing floor and says in effect, "I want you to spread your wing over me as my husband." But right when the tragedy of Ruth's widowhood seems to be resolved into a beautiful love story, a real wrinkle to Ruth and Boaz' happiness is made known by the righteous Boaz. There is another man who according to Hebrew custom has prior claim to Naomi's land and to Ruth. The impeccably honest Boaz will not proceed without giving this man his lawful opportunity. So chapter three ends again in the suspense of another setback. Though just like chapter 2 we see God's hand guiding this to its inevitable conclusion.

(4) In Chapter 4 Boaz and Ruth are married and she who was barren bears a child that continues the line of the Messiah.

- b. The greater point: It seems to have a greater purpose and that is the showing of God's continued role in moving forward His Story...redemptive history. Answers the question of how the Savior is coming?

(1) The promise was made in Gen. 3:15

(2) And it continues through this line...