

IMMERSE: KINGDOMS

Week 11 – What the Law Didn't Allow, God's Grace Allowed – Ruth 4

August 21, 2002

Ruth 4:1 - ...*Now Boaz, who represents Jesus, went up to the gate and sat down there;* It's harvest time. The barley and wheat had been threshed and winnowed. There was still work to be done. However, Boaz went up to the gate. Boaz left the threshing floor to finalize Ruth's redemption. This was Boaz' highest priority. He put the redemption of Ruth above his own business.

The gate was a PUBLIC place where governmental issues were handled. Elders sat to hear and to judge disputed matters and to render decisions. Boaz in the book of Ruth represents Jesus.

Jesus paid the debt we owed...in PUBLIC for all to see!

Ruth 4:1 – *Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, 'Come aside, friend, sit down here.'*

“Come” in the Hebrew lit. means “WOE,” “Alas”! Why does Boaz call the closer relative “friend”? “Friend” in the Hebrew is *peloni almoni* which lit. means “so and so,” “a certain one/a certain one.” This closer relative has NO NAME!?

Ruth 4:2-4 - *And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. Then he, BOAZ, said to the close relative, 'Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 And I thought to inform you,*

Didn't the kinsman-redeemer know about Naomi and Ruth – that they were destitute – that Naomi had sold her land? Was this kinsman-redeemer taking his responsibility seriously?

RE: NAOMI'S LAND, Boaz told the close relative/kinsman-redeemer - *'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'* And the close relative said, *"I will redeem it."*

Boaz didn't mention Ruth. Boaz mentioned the land without Ruth. Why? If Boaz offered both the land and Ruth...and if this man with no name said “No, I cannot redeem,” what would he be turning down – the land or Ruth?

Ruth 4:5-6 - *Boaz said, 'On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.'* ⁶ *And the close relative said, 'I cannot redeem it for myself,*

lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it.'

“Ruin” – in the Hebrew means - corrupt, destroy, spoil It means to cause the complete destruction of something. Redemption always involves a cost, a sacrifice. The friend was not willing. No grace is being extended by him. There is no explanation given in the text as to why marrying Ruth would destroy his inheritance. He could've been married. He could have had children and did not wish to include Ruth on divvying up his inheritance. Bottom line: he refused to marry Ruth.

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Ruth 4:7-8 - *Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel. ⁸ Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself.” So he took off his sandal. This was a transfer of his right as the closer relative – the kinsman-redeemer – to the next relative in line.*

Scripture that speaks of Levirate marriage which we've been discussing, tells us...

Deut. 25:7-10 - *...IF the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife, the WIDOW/RUTH, go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But if he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,'⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal the husband's brother's sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.'¹⁰ And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.' It was Ruth's job to confront the kinsman and receive his sandal. BUT – BOAZ went up to the gate and took Ruth's place. Is this not God's GRACE? Naomi and Ruth could DO NOTHING to redeem themselves. Before coming to faith in Jesus, are we bankrupt? YES! We're completely lost in sin. We owe a huge debt! In this book of Ruth God lays out His plan of redemption. BOAZ went up to the gate in Ruth's place. JESUS went up to Golgotha to die in our place.*

What of this closer relative?

He did have a “duty” – an “obligation.” However, this redemption action appears to be a provision under the Mosaic Covenant – not compulsory. AND YET - there was a severe rebuke for not being willing. The close relative was SHAMED - AND he was obligated to submit to the humiliation! Levirate marriage appears to be considered a duty

of love and a preserving of the family name within the nation of Israel. If that obligation was denied, it brought reproach and ridicule (Unger's Bible Dictionary, pp. 700-701)

Who is this closer relative who has not been given a name in the text? Who does he represent? There has been MUCH speculation re: this closer relative.

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Many believe that the closer relative represents...the LAW.

The closer relative did not extend grace to Ruth.

The law cannot save...

Rom. 3:20 - *Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified – declared righteous - in God's sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin.*

II Cor. 3:5-11 – the law is called the ministry of death/of condemnation. That passage states that the letter of the law kills.

BUT we need to remember that...GOD gave the law... consisting of 613 commandments – to the children of Israel to drive home the truth that sinful man cannot faithfully keep even ONE commandment within the law. Righteousness is NOT by the law...it is by faith in Jesus!

Gal. 3:24 - *...the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.*

We need to remember that in God's plan the law was never intended to save. This was not the fault of the law. The fault is our flesh – man cannot keep the law (Rom. 8:3).

BUT, the law reflects the holiness of God. The law is NOT to be shamed. The law is noted as perfect. Psa. 19:7 - *The law of the LORD is perfect, restoring the soul; the testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple;* The law reflects God – the law reflects the holiness of God. The law of the LORD restores the soul because it shows us our sin and it is our tutor to lead us to Christ (Gal. 3:24).

Another view concerning what/who the closer relative in Ruth represents is Satan!??? If this kinsman-redeemer represents the enemy, why would Boaz, a picture of Jesus, approach a close relative who represents Satan and ask him to redeem Ruth?

Could the closer relative represent mankind? Regarding the closer relative portraying mankind...to whom are we most closely related? OURSELVES! The “closer” relative in the book of Ruth is definitely closer! “So and so” could NOT pay the redemption price for Ruth who was destitute. The closer relative had a debt of his own – he had his own inheritance to consider! If the closer relative married Ruth and Ruth gave birth to a son

the land would be held in trust for the male child that would be raised up in the deceased husband's name in the name of Elimelech and Mahlon...NOT in the closer relative's name. Re: Ruth – no - *I cannot redeem!* Mankind is self-centered!

And re: the closer relative not having a name in the book of Ruth, The Expositor's Bible Commentary states that this was deliberate. Since it was shameful not to take on the duty of Levirate marriage, the closer relative was not worthy of mention. Someone expressed it this way, "He who would NOT preserve his brother's name does not preserve his own name." Through Ruth, God established the line of the Messiah (Matt. 1:5). Ruth is in Jesus' genealogy as well as Boaz!

What the closer kinsman thought would ruin his reputation, would have inscribed him in Scripture as a hero of the faith! So, he remains unnamed!

Boaz as the second in line, not the closer relative, was the "unexpected" one.

What did people think of Jesus at His first coming?

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He was the unexpected the Messiah. The Messiah surely wouldn't come from Nazareth – "Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?" Nathanael asked when Philip told him about Jesus – the Messiah. AND, the Jewish people in Jesus' day were focusing on a Messiah who would overthrow the oppression of Rome – they were looking for a conquering King. Jesus at His first coming spoke of salvation – of a change of HEART! Jesus was the "unexpected" Messiah.

Boaz, second in line – the "unexpected" relative represents Jesus.

Ruth 4:9-10 - ⁹ And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. ¹⁰ Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.' Redemption for Boaz was costly – he acquired the debt. All Naomi and Ruth's debt became his. BUT - can you imagine Boaz' joy? Boaz' motive – LOVE for Ruth!

Ruth 4:11-12 - And all the people who were at the gate, and the elders, said, 'We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be

famous in Bethlehem. ¹² May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which the LORD will give you from this young woman. '

The LORD make Ruth like Rachel and Leah - ?

- From Rachel and Leah (daughters of Laban - not Jewish!) came the 12 tribes of Israel. Ruth is a Gentile.
- Plus both Rachel and Leah left their families (left Laban) to join Jacob – and came to believe in the one true God.
- God granted conception to Rachel; Ruth 4:13 – The LORD gave Ruth conception.

May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem

- Micah 5:2 – The Messiah would be born through David's line in Bethlehem EPHRATHAH.
- Ruth and Boaz were great grandparents of King David.
- The book of Ruth prophesies that the King would come from the line of Judah. May you remember that when you next read I Samuel which speaks of the beginning of the monarchy in Israel.

May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah

- God used a Levirate marriage with Tamar to continue the house of Judah through Perez (Gen. 38).
 - Twins, Zerah and Perez, were born to Tamar. These children were born out of wedlock. Zerah was first and a midwife put a scarlet thread on his hand.
 - Zerah drew back his hand and his brother, Perez, came out UNEXPECTEDLY.
 - Perez means “breach,” “pushing through”
 - GRACE pushes through.
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- Perez was UNEXPECTED.
 - Perez is in Jesus genealogy. Jesus was “unexpected” at His first coming!
 - Perez was illegitimate.
 - Deut. 23:2 - *One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD.*
 - Perez was from the tribe of Judah – the kingly line.
 - In Perez line - within the tribe of Judah, the kingly line - there were NO KINGS until DAVID. David was the tenth generation!

- What about Saul who was anointed as king?
- Saul was anointed as King (I Sam. 10) BECAUSE the people REJECTED God as their King (I Sam. 8:7; I Sam. 12:12). The people wanted a king like the nations! In I Sam. 9, GOD told Samuel to anoint Saul as King. AND Saul wasn't from the kingly tribe! Saul was from the tribe of Benjamin! Shouldn't the people have realized?

Ruth 4:13-21 - *So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son. ¹⁴ Then the women in the community - said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a close relative – without a kinsman-redeemer; and may his name be famous in Israel! ¹⁵ And may he be to you a restorer of life (the house of Elimelech was restored) and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him' – the one who would restore ¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. ¹⁷ Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, 'There is a son born to Naomi.' BORN TO NAOMI? It's all in the family. Ruth vicariously bore the son that would restore the family name of Naomi's husband, Elimelech, and her son, Machlon's name. Machlon was Ruth's husband who had died.*

And they called his name Obed. Obed means SERVANT – and in serving God, we EXALT God...we WORSHIP God.

And, we told about Obed that *he is the father of Jesse, the father of David.*

In Ruth 4:18-22 we read...

¹⁸ Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; ¹⁹ Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; ²⁰ Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; ²¹ Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed;

²² Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

David was the tenth generation.

In this book of Ruth where HOPE is mentioned for the first time in Scripture in Ruth 1:12, we find the one called David!

We find the prophecy of David and the beginning of the Davidic Kingdom promised in the book of Ruth – promising ULTIMATELY the rule and reign of the Messiah!