

The Book  
Of  
**Ruth**

An Exposition Of The Book Of Ruth As Delivered In  
A Series of Messages To The Congregation of  
Sequoyah Sovereign Grace Baptist Church,  
Cherokee, NC.

by  
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## **A NOTE FROM THE PUBLISHER**

Let the reader be cautioned that the following material is the unedited, verbatim personal notes used to preach a series of messages on the book of Ruth. It was never intended or even expected that these notes would be published or seen by anyone else. Therefore, expect to find errors in punctuation, spelling, style and some marginal and parenthetical notes which have no explanation.

However, even in this unedited format, the material is readable, simple, and profound and will prove useful to anyone who wants to gain a better insight into the book of Ruth. For this reason, they are added to the library of works available on the [Grace-ebooks.com](http://Grace-ebooks.com) website.

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## INTRODUCTION

The portion of this book most well-known and highly regarded is the entreaty that Ruth made to Naomi in verse 16 of chapter 1—“Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God.” These words are beautifully poetic and often used in wedding vows, and they bespeak the character of Ruth in her loyalty and love for her mother-in-law.

However, these words, though beautiful and profound, are not the subject of this book. This book is about the *Lord Jesus Christ* and the *redemption of His bride*, the church. Ruth is a picture of the *church* and Boaz is a picture of *Christ* (Ruth 3:9 Kinsman = Redeemer).

This brief story takes place in the time of the Judges (Ruth 1:1). Most put the time between when Ehud judged Israel after he had slain the corpulent king Eglon by thrusting a dagger in his belly while telling him that he had a message from God and the early days of Gideon, when the Midianites held Israel captive and stole all their groceries, bringing about famine. Because there was no king in Israel at this time and the people did what was right in their own eyes, certain things were prevalent. Though the

people of Israel retrained their identity and the tabernacle remained at Shiloh, the fact was that the people were, to a great extent given over to idolatry. Their association with the pagans of the promised land soon turned to assimilation and on any given day, God's people might not be discernable from the surrounding idolaters. The Israelites seemed to transition easily between the worship of God and the worship of Baal. Compromise is always the path of least resistance and every child of God is in danger of it because of the proliferation of false religion on every hand. This fact cannot be discounted in the record of the ease in which Elimelech left off trusting the Lord and moved toward the ease and wealth of the Moabites. It is true that there was famine in the land, but it is also true that the living God had caused it, and as with all trial and tribulation, faith—the existence of faith—is proved by it. Rather than trust God, Elimelech did what was right in his own eyes and quit Bethlehem-Judah and took his wife and sons to Moab, to save his life under the protection of a false god.

The characters in this book are named, and their names reveal and contribute a great deal to the story and its outcome. Elimelech means “My God is King.” This name was given Him by his parents, who apparently were believers. His name should have been a comfort and stay in this time of famine but the knowledge that God was his king did not prevent

him from leaving for the land of the Moabites. It is apparent that he did not believe that God was indeed king and sovereign and his actions made that obvious. His wife's name was Naomi which means "sweet and pleasant." They had two sons, Mahlon, which means "weakness" and Chilion, which means "consumption." These married two gentile, Moabitish women; Orpah, which means "stiff-necked" and Ruth, which means "companion." The main character is Boaz, which in the Hebrew means "fleetness:" and in the Greek means "in him is strength." Boaz was the son of Rahab the Harlot. He takes Ruth, a gentile, for his wife and by that union finally begets the Christ (Mat. 1:4-5, 16). What a glorious picture of our Lord free association with sinners. He was numbered with the transgressors; so much so that His earthly lineage contains a son of a whore married to a gentile.

This story is the story of the method of grace. It is the theme repeated throughout the word of God; ruin, redemption, regeneration, reconciliation, and restoration. It is the story of every believer. It is our history. Though God is our King, we left the safety of his care in weakness and were consumed in the land of the lie. Like Naomi we went out full and came back empty. Our estate was Naomi to Mara, from fullness in Adam before the fall to utter ruin in him afterward. Adam was a prince who wound up a pauper and in Him we did the same.

After the death of Elimelech, and his two sons, Naomi was left with two Moabitish daughters-in-law. All three were widowed and penniless. Naomi came back to her homeland because she heard that the Lord had visited His people and given them bread.

Is this not the Gospel? Is this not how God's elect return home? Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of God. It was good news that there was bread at the father's house.

When did she return? She returned at the time of harvest (Ruth 1:22). That is when every one of the elect return. She did not return with the thought of being restored to her former stature, but to take her place among those in poverty, a beggar at mercy's door (Luke 15:17-19). Though Naomi had nothing she knew that the law required that the reapers of harvest allow the poor to follow along behind them and freely pick up what was left behind (Lev. 19:9-19; Deu. 24:19). Like the Syrophenician woman she was but a dog waiting for crumbs from the master's table.

Also, the law allowed that a kinsman could redeem the life of a poverty stricken relative. Naomi had taught her daughter-in-law well. We see in Ruth's behavior a hunger for redemption. She would not remain in her sad estate when there was a Balm in Gilead and great physician there. She knew that Boaz could redeem Naomi and knew likewise that she might have part in the inheritance of the



children of God. She was not presumptuous but came to the field of Boaz in hope and faith (Heb. 11:6; Ruth 2:1-2). She was going to put herself where the redeemer might see her. If you would be found of Christ you must go to where He is, in His church where His gospel is preached. She did not approach the reapers or seek help from the other poor ones; she walked in the light she had been given and gleaned from what was left. She took her place as a needy sinner and prayed the kinsman would see her and have pity on her.

She found grace in the eyes of her redeemer. Boaz saw her. He laid his eyes on her. He had compassion on her (Ruth 2:5). She had no idea but she was a child of providence. Boaz, having seen her, provided for her on purpose, though she knew Him not (Ruth 2:15-16; Hosea 2:8). Ruth came home with more than she and Naomi could use (Eph. 3:20).

When Naomi found out who had treated Ruth so well, she rejoiced in the Lord (Ruth 2:20). She gave Ruth explicit instructions which Ruth humbly followed. She came and laid at the Master's feet, awaiting his instruction (Ruth 3:3-4). She risked being scandalized. She risked losing her reputation and she had a good reputation (Ruth 3:11). Her need far exceeded any thought or consideration of censure from the inconsequential world. "The kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent take it by force" (Mat. 11:12). When Boaz awoke and found

Ruth at his feet he asked her what she desired. In short, she said, "I want you to marry me, I want to be your wife, I want you to redeem me" (Ruth 3:8-9).

Boaz agreed to redeem her. but he was not the nearest kinsman. The nearest kinsman had a prior claim on Elimelech's household and that was a transaction that must be settled, or else there could be no redemption (Ruth 3:12). This nearer kinsman pictures the law, which has the claim of death on all of us, and the elect cannot be effectually redeemed unless the just claims of the law are fully answered (Romans 3:24-26).

Boaz, beautifully picturing the person of our blessed Redeemer came to the man who had *prior* claim and told him that he had claim of Elimelech field. The man said that he would buy it. Boaz told the man that if he bought the field he would have to *marry Ruth*. The man then told Boaz that he couldn't buy it because it would mar his inheritance and told Boaz to buy it. What a picture of grace this is!

Our Lord is our elder brother, our near kinsman, who has the right to redeem. He set His affection on His bride when she knew Him not. He provided for her. He loved her with an everlasting love. He came to redeem her but not at the expense of justice and the law. She was in bondage to the law because from birth she was condemned by it. Its claim upon her was death. Our Lord paid the debt, redeemed his

people, and married His bride. He would not rest till he finished the thing (Ruth 3:18).

As we study this book we will once again be reminded of how we became heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ. This is the story of Christ and the redemption of his elect, gentile, pagan bride. This is the story of our kinsman—redeemer.

## IT CAME TO PASS

Ruth 1:1-5

1, Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons. 2, And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there. 3, And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons. 4, And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years. 5, And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

The first five words of this book are words that are generally, in the natural realm, held to mean "This is what happened." However, to the believer these words speak of eternal things, things purposed, things that are part of a grand design, a design that is precisely marked out from beginning to end. This book begins with the word "Now." This

word has many applications but one of its definitions is, "At this point in the series of events." This definition perfectly fits the phrase, "It came to pass." The word "it" refers to the book of Ruth. At this point in the series of events the story in the Book of Ruth came to pass. The series of events is what we know as time or human history. This language teaches that the Book of Ruth is placed in time to bring a thing purposed to its appointed fulfillment. Aside from the fact that these words are often a source of great comfort to the believer going through trial, because of the message of this book, we are able to see why it came to pass. This point in the series of events tells us that the series of events is about Christ and His wonderful redemption of sinners. It came to pass might be interpreted "it was appointed to fulfill." It came as all things come, by the hand of the sovereign Lord who has made history to be the servant of His glorious providence on behalf of His chosen (1 Sam. 2:7-8; Ps. 113:7-9). In the scheme of things, this book, with all its unique and interesting, minute details is a shrouded record of the singular subject of scripture, the glorification of God in the salvation of sinners by the redemption wrought by Christ. *Now it came to pass.*

Since this book is about redemption it is important to note that the subject of redemption presupposes some things. Redemption speaks of a transaction where a thing is bought, paid for and

possessed. Redemption presupposes need or necessity for the thing or person to be redeemed. If there was no need, if there was no price owed then there was no reason for redemption. The heart of redemption is the presupposition of being in extreme ruin or poverty to the place that the needy one is entirely shut up to the one who has the right and the wherewithal to pay the price and possess the one redeemed. In this particular series of events we find that redemption is presented in its most glorious manner. Redemption is a love story. The loved one, the one who is redeemed, is Ruth. She is a Moabite woman. This tells us some very important things about the redemption accomplished by our Lord as our Kinsman redeemer. The woman, Ruth, who is redeemed by Boaz is in the direct lineage of our Lord Jesus Christ. Also, the fact that it was a Moabite that was redeemed and Christ was her descendent teaches us that our Lord's redemption involved the gentiles. Also the location of this redemption and the establishment of the lineage of Christ is the very town where our Lord was born.

The first thing to notice is that in this course of events is the means by which the need for redemption is established, because it establishes how Ruth comes to need redemption. The sad and disobedient act of Elimelech was what brought Ruth to the place of being in ruin and in need of redemption. Is this not a picture of our estate in

Adam. Though we did not know Adam, though we were not there when he made his terrible choice, it is that act that brought his wife and his children into the estate of ruin (Romans 5:12). In Adam all died. Before Ruth was ever found in utter poverty and need, before she was married to Elimelech's son, Elimelech had made a disobedient decision that set this entire series of events in motion. Elimelech's act was that he disbelieved God because of his perception of circumstance. There was a famine in the Land, the Land of milk and honey. The famine was directly due to the disobedience of the people to whom the Lord had given the Land. They had slipped into idolatry in disobedience to the direct command of God and the result was chastisement of the Lord. The Lord gave the people to be in captivity to the Midianites who spoiled the land and robbed the people of the harvest they had planted (Jud. 6:1-6). The result of this famine was that circumstance voided Elimelech's trust in the Lord (Prov. 3:5-7). This famine was a warning from God (Lev. 26:19-20). The result of this decision brought about a veritable checklist of unsavory characters and reveals our Lord association with the worst of humanity. Two of our Lord's great grandmothers were a Moabite woman who descended from Lot's incest and a harlot named Rahab.

Elimelech's decision, in his own mind, was the right thing to do. I'm sure at his heart he was

providing for his own family. He did not go to Moab to set up housekeeping. It is said that he went to sojourn there (v. 1), which suggests that he meant to stay there only as long as the famine lasted and then return home. But sin has a course that is not governed by our intentions. It always ends in death. There is simply no spiritual reason to compromise on the promise of God. There is no possibility of anything but loss when human logic addresses circumstance rather than believing God in the face of dire circumstance. No good end could come of this. What perhaps started with good intentions ended up with this family taking up residence in a pagan land. This dire circumstance, this famine came to pass and pass it did, but by the time Gideon had delivered Israel from the Midianites, Elimelech had sunk his roots deep in the land of the idolaters (v. 2). Remember that the design of the trials of the believer is to reveal faith. Be aware that the day of tribulation will bring us to the feet of Christ or it will drive us headlong into the world. The believer gains nothing from this world—nothing. This record reveals that there was no real reason for Elimelech to leave Bethlehem. He was not in poverty when he left (1:21). There is no indication that other families left. Those who stayed were gloriously delivered and were in peace for many years. Elimelech left for reasons known only to him. Like our federal head, Adam, there is no reason given why he ate of the



fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Perhaps he saw no harm come to Eve when she ate. Perhaps he, like his wife, saw that it was good for food, pleasing to the eyes and desired to make one wise, decided there was evidently no harm in doing so. The record simply said "And he did eat, and those four words were the end of innocence for all mankind. Our text succinctly records that Elimelech "went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons." He evidently felt the way to deal with trouble was to run and hide in the lap of luxury. The believer cannot escape his trials. In the midst of them, he is promised that they will end at the appointed time and thus he will be able to bear them (1 Cor. 10:13). He based his decision on his perception of surrounding events and decided that he would believe his eyes rather than believe God. Verse 3 declares the end of unbelief, death and destitution.

Following the example of their father, Elimelech's sons continued in disobedience and as is the course of sin, they went even farther into rebellion. They married Moabite women. The first words of v. 4 might as well say that they went headlong into what God had strictly forbidden (Deut. 7:2-3). Their wretched choice was tantamount to saying that God and Baal were both true Gods. Such mixture is absolutely forbidden (2 Cor. 6:14-18). The record is plain...they both died. The wages of sin is death. I'm sure that Elimelech wanted nothing but the

best for his wife. He surely meant her no harm when he sojourned in the world of disobedience. His actions brought death and ruin to his household. Naomi perhaps found comfort in her sons when her husband died but soon sin removed even that comfort from her. The word said she was left, alone. She was without hope in the world that her husband had delivered her into. Is this not the story of the result of what happened in the garden? This story of Elimelech teaches us some important truths. Everyone dies. We all have an appointment with death. Is it not far better to die in faith than to die in sad estate of disobedience? Also, we must remember that we will not prosper in disobedience. Also, the comfort that the world gives is temporary and always leads to despair and emptiness. The only real asset in this world is to have a portion of that which is not of this world. What profits a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?

Finally, this entire episode must be viewed in the light of the first 4 words, "Now. It came to pass." This is a sad story indeed. Elimelech did not do what was right in the eyes of God. He did what was right in his own eyes. His entire family suffered because of his disobedience. Though he followed the dictates of his own sinful perception, and though he did wrong and though he suffered the consequences of his sin and brought that pain upon his family, he exactly and precisely and by the numbers did what God had

ordained to come to pass (Ps. 76:10<sup>1</sup>). Down the line the union of this Moabite woman and the son of Rahab the harlot will produce the King of Kings, the Lord, the Messiah, the great redeemer of His people. The famine came upon the land because God, from all eternity, had chose this hand maid named Ruth to reveal how He saves His elect, by the incarnation, substitution and satisfaction of His beloved Son, the ancestral son of Ruth and Boaz (Romans 8:28). *Now, it came to pass.*

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<sup>1</sup> Ps. 76:10 Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.

## PROFESSION OR POSSESSION

Ruth 1:6-18

6, Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. 7, Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

8, And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law, Go, return each to her mother's house: the LORD deal kindly with you, as ye have dealt with the dead, and with me.

9, The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept. 10, And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

11, And Naomi said, Turn again, my daughters: why will ye go with me? are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?

12, Turn again, my daughters, go your way; for I am too old to have an husband. If I should say, I have hope, if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;

13, Would ye tarry for them till they were grown? would ye stay for them from having husbands? nay, my

daughters; for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me. 14, And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. 15, And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. 16, And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17, Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me. 18, When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

As we last saw, Naomi had moved to Moab with her husband Elimelech, along with her two sons Mahlon and Chilion. This move was from the Land of promise to the land of the pagans. This pictured the fall of Adam, and resulted in his entire family being brought down by him. This action, no matter the reason was against the command of God and resulted in utter ruin. Elimelech died there and left Naomi a widow. Elimelech's sons followed the example of their father in disobedience by marrying pagan women, also against the strict prohibition of

God. The two sons died and the house of Naomi was a house of poverty occupied by three widows. These three women tell us a great deal about believers and unbelievers.

Naomi was a believer. We know this because the great trial that she endured did not drive her from God but brought her home to God. In every case, the trail of the believer will eventuate in the tried soul taking up residence at Mercy's door. There are no exceptions to this rule because the design of the trail is to do exactly that. Trials are not punishment, they are loving correction of course, and though painful they always produce "the peaceable fruits of righteousness unto them that are exercised thereby."

One might ask, "Why did Naomi go with her husband in the first place?" As a believer, she knew that this was a wrong move. In the East and under the Old Covenant, the wife was bound to follow her husband. Though in the Jewish economy, she was afforded more rights than among the pagans, in truth, her entire concept of self, family and possessions was tied to her husband. Her identity was her husband. I know that in our enlightened society such a thought is anathema. And I know that this is due in large part to the abuse of Bible teaching by zealous cowardly men. Every manner of crime has been committed under the misuse of this Bible teaching. It is no new thing that unbelievers would take the Old Covenant and wrest the

scriptures to their own destruction. Remember, however, that the Old Covenant was a picture of Christ and His bride. Naomi followed Elimelech because he was her husband, and no doubt, she did it out of love for him. We follow Christ because He is our husband, and we do it because we love Him and many times in our marital career, He will lead us to unpleasant places, but He will never leave us and will never die and leave us to fend for ourselves (Is. 43:1-7). We are not our own, we are bought with a price. The dowry paid to our Father was His blood. Over this entire episode is the glorious overriding fact of the sovereign providence of God. This true story was written for us to learn about redemption and the elements of the story reflect that. To a great degree this is our own experience of The Grace of God (Romans 15:4).

Orpah, it would appear, thought very much of Naomi. At first she was willing to quit her own country and follow Naomi back to the Promised Land. The sad report is that in the end she returned to her own country and her own gods. Orpah is a picture of those who profess faith but do not persevere till the end.

Ruth, was a chosen vessel. She was the object of grace. Out of love for Naomi, she quit her country, forsook her gods and went to the Promised Land with Naomi. Her actions were born of more than love for Naomi. She believed in the God of Israel and as a

believer, she left all for Him. She is a picture of the one whom God has given faith. Such will endure till the end (Jer. 32:38-40).

Naomi was a woman of faith (vv. 6-7). Though she had lived in Moab for some ten years, she had never planted her roots there. Her heart was never in the land of Baal worshippers. Her heart was in Bethlehem Judah. This is seen in the fact that she kept up, by whatever means, with what was going on back home (v. 6). Her interest was Godward. One might say that her circumstance had brought her to the place of wanting to return and that is certainly an aspect of her desire, but remember who is the God of circumstance and remember also how that He always gets His word to His elect (John 10:3, 27). God would not leave His own to rot among the ruined (Deut. 6:23; 2 Peter 2:9). Naomi desired to return because of what she heard. I love the simplicity of the Gospel. It is not a report of what you must do, or what you should do; it is that report of what God had done, and that report addresses the elect's most basic (God ordered) need and causes him to hunger for what he has heard about. Naomi heard, while she was still in Moab, "how that the Lord had visited His people and given them bread." This is the message of the preacher. Singular and precise, it is a declaration that God has visited His people and given them the bread of life. Who would be interested in such a message? Not Orpah, who



had bread a plenty and a god for every occasion. The Gospel is an arrow shot at a venture by the preacher, but the language of it is a guided missal. We don't know who the elect are, but God has plowed that ground to be a furrow of faith. Ours is but to scatter the seed. The Lord will make that seed find purchase and bring forth fruit unto repentance and life. For those dearly beloved elect, whom God has brought low, made poor and hungry, it is nothing but good news that the Lord has visited His people and has given them bread (Hosea 2:6-7). Ho, everyone that is thirsty, everyone that hungers for righteousness, good news has found its way to Moab—there's bread in the Promised Land, living bread, eternal bread.

The one, whom God has given faith, acts upon what he believes. Notice the first word in verse 7. Wherefore means, “based upon what has been revealed.” Based upon the news that the Lord had visited His people and given them bread, “she went forth out of the place where she was .” The Gospel is the proverbial line in the sand that requires a verdict. “who is on the Lord 's side.” It confronts the heart with “how long halt ye between two opinions ... choose this day whom ye will serve.” It brings about the confession of Joshua “as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.” There can be no reconciliation of Baal and the true and living God. You can't eat the Lord's bread at the hog troughs of

Moab. You can't dine with the king while living on the dung heap. Come out of her my people and be ye separate. (Psalm 137:4; 1 John 2:15)... “she went forth out of the place where she was.”

It is evident from Ruth and Orpah's response to Naomi that Naomi was a woman of grace and kindness. These two pagan girls were willing to leave hearth and home to accompany Naomi to Bethlehem. Without compromising the truth, Naomi had lived peaceably with these two pagans and her demeanor had been such that they truly loved her. In this, Naomi is an example worthy of emulation (Romans 12:17-18). Kindness never goes out of style.

In verses 8-9 we find Naomi, encouraging her daughters-in-law to return to their families. She commended their persons and kissed them good-bye, having prayed for them. Both Orpah and Ruth declared their allegiance to Naomi (v. 10). If you will notice the last phrase of verse 9, the actions recorded might well be attached to what religion calls a “Holy Ghost Meeting” (5 boxes of Kleenex). If there was ever a time for an invitation to be given it was now (funeral, while your hearts are tender—accept). Emotions were running high. Sentimentality was rampant, but feelings and emotions pass with the change of circumstance and are of no eternal consequence. Naomi was a wise woman. Instead of seizing the opportunity to proselytize these two weeping and howling pagans, instead of extending

the right hand of fellowship or putting them under watch care. she did her best to discourage them from coming with her (vv. 11-13). Was she cold and heartless? Did she want no stars in her crown? Did she not want these two girls to worship the true God and leave their paganism? Surely she did, but she would not have them come, based on the emotions of the moment. She would not have them leave all for her sake. She would have them know that to serve the Lord would cost everything. If they were to follow her it would have to be because they saw value in Her God, not her. Professions made in the heat of revivalist's fervor where a river of tears flow on man-made altars are not worth the salt in the tears brought forth. That which is born in the storm, dies in the calm. Those who come to Christ do so having been informed of the cost. Christianity ain't no pie in the sky. It is a sword of division and the believer willingly gives all he has to have the pearl of great price, or he will not have it at all (Matt. 10:34-39; 8:19-22; Luke 14:28). Orpah caved. Though she kissed her mother-in-law, it was a kiss of departure. She ran well for a time, but like Demas, she forsook Naomi "having loved this present world." Her name means "stiff-necked and declining." There are many Orpahs, who for a time seem to love and embrace the Gospel but the fire of trial, the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches cause them to return to the supposed safety of their former estate. The

Gospel does not promise fame and fortune, health and wealth, and a Lexus. Be warned, if you go with Naomi the only promise is “sufficient grace.” You will be as Job. You will serve God for nothing. Only faith and love will do in the service of the Lord. In this world you shall have much tribulation. You cannot serve God and mammon. If you come you must come worshipping God, not for gain, but because He is worthy even if it kills you. Come and dine, not on the leeks and garlic of Egypt but the light bread that nature's soul hateth! Orpah kissed life good-bye because the way of the cross was too hard. Look at the last phrase of verse 14, “but Ruth *clave* to her.” This verb “clave” is in the perfect tense. It carries the idea on not only being a completed action but in a sense a finished action. The Hebrew language uses the perfect tense to describe the future as if it had already come to pass. Ruth clave to Naomi forever. She clave now and would still be holding at worlds end. Naomi could not discourage Ruth. She would not leave ...she could not. She was chosen of God and all that the father gave to Christ shall come to Christ. Grace destroyed her hope in the world, put an end to her first husband, so she could be married to another. She did not know it yet, but providence was moving her feet, directing her path and giving her a cleaving heart.

Orpah saw something in Naomi but what she saw was not worth the pain. Ruth saw everything in

Naomi and she would go with her even if it cost her everything. Many, in religion, see value in Christ. They rejoice in His power to perform miracles. They love the fact that He feeds them, they would make Him king to serve their bellies, but they disdain the harsh reality that to have Him is to incur the vehement hatred of the world and the real possibility, even probability that family and friends will disown them. Believing ain't for sissies. The believer sees inestimable value in Christ. He is precious to the believer. In Him is forgiveness of sin, wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption. He is the true friend that sticketh closer than a brother. In His face is the glory of God revealed. He has answered the laws demands perfectly and has put away our sin by the sacrifice of Himself. Let ole' "stiff necked and declining" go her way—the believer is going stick like glue. The words of Ruth in verse 16 are the words of a heart that God has committed to Christ. Ruth was not merely changing doctrine, she was changing Gods. Barnard use to say "I can't introduce you to my God until I first kill your God. Look at 2 Sam. 15:19-21. (Ittai means "with you"). Ruth's commitment was to Naomi's God. Anything less will send you packing. Her confession was much like believer's baptism. In that blessed act, the believer is saying "the Lord is my God, His people are my people, when He died I

died, when He was buried I was buried, when He arose I arose, and where He lives, I live.”

“Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried”

## THE GOSPEL

6, Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread. 7, Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.

Ruth 1:6-7

It has been said and rightly so that the singular time and place that the God of glory is most fully revealed is on the cross of Calvary. There alone He reveals Himself in all His attributes. There alone is the Gospel most perfectly and beautifully displayed. To know God is to know Him as He is. Though He cannot be fully known because we by searching cannot find Him out, the glorious report of what took place on that tree 2000 years ago, is where such knowledge is found. That blessed report is known as

the Gospel, the good news, the glad tiding of good things. There is debate among men as to whether that report is necessary to be heard in order for the elect to be saved. I have dear friends who say that the elect can be saved without hearing the Gospel, asserting that since the bible is the Word of God and is the Gospel from cover to cover, and is the singular thing to be preached, that God can save a person by that person merely reading the Bible. I don't discount that possibility but neither do I assert that it is so. I simply do not find salvation coming to anyone, particularly in the NT, apart from the preaching and the hearing of the Gospel.

The preacher's credo, if you will, is that necessity has been laid upon him and that necessity is to preach the Gospel. One of the successes of false religion has been to diminish the preaching of the cross and instead opt for pep talks, and self-help lectures designed to make fallen men feel better about themselves. However, their success will be short lived and they will find that when all is said and done that the angels of heaven make it their business to go about preaching the everlasting Gospel.

God is a God of order and as Sovereign He has ordained to employ certain means to bring His elect to the knowledge of what He has done for them. The means that He employs is the preaching of the Gospel. The Ethiopian Eunuch was reading the

scriptures. He was reading the 53rd chapter of Isaiah, a chapter that is Gospel full, pressed down and running over. That eunuch was one of God's elect and was a man of character and intellect. Yet, he had no idea who the prophet Isaiah was talking about in his prophecy, but he needed to know, if he was to confess Christ. The Lord sent Philip to take Isaiah 53 and preach Christ to him.

The Lord has made it clear that this is the order that He has ordained. Some who disagree with this fact assert that God does not need a preacher. That is, of course true. But need is not ever the issue with God. Purpose is the defining principle of how God operates and scripture is replete with references to the truth that God has ordained to save His elect through the preaching of the Gospel (John 6:45; 1 Cor. 1:21; Heb. 4:12; James 1:18; 1 Peter 1:23-25). There is therefore neither right nor warrant to believe or to do otherwise. Perhaps the clearest representation of this is found in Romans 10:13-17. If no other passage existed concerning the subject, Romans 10:13-17 would stand as a clarion of the manner in which God makes His people aware of their salvation. This passage declares that it is impossible to call on Christ until you believe on Him. It is not possible to believe on Him unless you have heard the Gospel. It is impossible to hear the Gospel without a preacher and it is impossible to preach unless God sends you. The only conclusion that



could possibly be reached is that faith comes by hearing and hearing by the (preached) word of God.

Hearing the Gospel calls for a verdict and always eventuates in acting upon what is heard (v. 6; 2 Cor. 2:14-16). The reason, the only reason given for Naomi leaving Moab was that she heard that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. She reached a verdict because she had heard what God had done. One might say that she was given a choice to go or stay. This would only be true if she were not hungry. God had ordered time and circumstance to empty Naomi's stomach and if she was to live there was only one place where there was bread. The beatitudes declared that God has blessed some to hunger and thirst after righteousness and the promise is that they will be filled. In the matter of the salvation of the elect the fix is in. The only one who rejects the bread is the one who is not hungry.

Notice the simplicity and singularity of the message she heard. The Gospel is not a theological treatise. It is not spoken in theological terminology. It is declared in the terms of the most basic of human needs. Hunger and thirst make up the theology of the Gospel. These natural and real needs are understood and felt. Our Lord uses these organic and fundamental drives to speak of the spiritual needs of the elect. Not everyone needs Christ, but everyone of the elect do. In the days of the wilderness, the provision for the people was bread

and water. When the people wanted meat with their bread, God gave it to them and sent leanness to their soul, when they grew tired of the bread and loathed it, the Lord sent serpents to bite and kill them. Christ declared that He was the bread from heaven and the water of life. He declared that meat for the believer was to do the will of God, the works of the believer was to believe on Him whom God had sent. On the great last day of the feast of tabernacles our Lord stood up and cried aloud "If any man thirst, come unto me and drink." Naomi did not hear that the Lord had visited His people and had given them proper ecclesiology, or eschatology or high theology. She heard, while in a state of starvation, that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread. This was good news and she immediately acted upon the faith that she had been given (Ps. 132:15).

The language used in this simple phrase in v. 6 is important. It is a message of design and is a message of grace and mercy. The Lord often visits His people's sin with the rod of chastisement and such a visit is always well deserved. This visitation is not with a rod but with provender. His visit is defined by what he brought. He hath visited His people in giving them bread. Note well that he did not visit His people to offer them bread, or to give them an option, or to make bread available if they chose to eat it. He came and gave and His people no longer hungered. The design of the message was that

in the giving, it addressed the problem. He would not have brought bread if they were full. He has emptied them and brings to them the bread of life. The Gospel is good news for the poor. Within the blessed truth resides the truth of their blessed condition. Notice also that this is a message of a finished thing. God had come to His people and had given them bread. The Gospel is a report of what God has done (1 Cor. 2:9-12 ...has freely given.” Naomi did not leave Moab with doubts about bread, she came to where God was and believed that He was the rewarder of them that diligently sought Him. The preacher can't make you hungry all he can do is tell you where the bread is. Salvation from death to life, from destitution to untold riches, from pauper to prince, from hunger to bread. is “of the Lord.”

Faith is the active life of the believer. When Naomi heard the news, she left Moab (v. 7). Faith without works is dead. Faith's works are ordained and sure to come to pass (Eph. 2:8-10). Faith operates in works of love (James 1:27; 2:14- 26; Gal. 5:5-6). Faith is not demonstrated in legal, authoritarian, stern, puritanical austerity, but rather in love, mercy, kindness and grace (Romans 14:17; Gal. 5:22-23).

“All men have not faith” is the declaration of the scripture (2 Thess. 3:2). Faith is so individual that it is only discerned by the one who possesses it and the One who is the object of it. Nothing we do can

prove that we have faith. However, we can do things that reveal that we do not have it. Ruth and Orpah are examples. Ruth believed Naomi's God. Orpah did not. This is clearly revealed in one thing, belief. Ruth was governed by the unseen, Orpah was governed by that which was visible (2 Cor. 4:18-5:1; Hebrews 11:13-16). Orpah was clearly "mindful of that country" of Moab. Where a man's treasures are there shall his heart be also. Orpah looked back and just like Lot's wife, she lost everything. What was the difference between Ruth and Orpah. It was the same difference between every lost and saved sinner. It was the grace of God (1 Cor. 4:7). Ruth was not a better woman and there is no indication that Orpah was anything other than a loving and kind daughter-in-law. Kindness, love, affection and tenderness have nothing to do with your salvation. Grace alone makes a sinner a saint.

The same circumstances had befallen both Ruth and Orpah. Both were hungry by the act of God. Naomi had told both daughters-in-law the same thing (vv. 8-13). But God had made Ruth hunger for Bethlehem's bread, and Naomi's company while Orpah was left to hunger for the sustenance of Moab (v. 14-17). The Gospel is designed for those whom God has made hungry for the bread of life. The Gospel declares that the Lord has visited His people in giving them bread and has given His people faith to come and dine.

## LOVE'S COMMITMENT

14, And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother in law; but Ruth clave unto her. 15, And she said, Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law. 16, And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God: 17, Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if ought but death part thee and me.

Ruth 1:14-17

The word of God speaks of commitment. It generally refers to committing something that we deem as ours to the Lord (Ps. 37:5; Prov. 16:3; 2 Tim. 1:12). This is the truest sense in which we are committed to the Lord. We have, because of grace, cast all we are and have upon the Lord. Our desire is to be kept by Him. Because religion has diminished the word “commitment to mean a personal, meritorious act of allegiance born of the decision of free will, the principle of personal commitment is often avoided by those who hold that salvation and all its attendant mercies are of the Lord. However the

believer is committed to Christ because He, in love, has committed Himself to us. Love is commitment. There is no doubt that the result of love is an act of the will. We give because we love. We guard our loved one's because we love them. We are jealous for their honor because we love them. The record of the word is that God loved us and because of that love He sent His Son to die for us (John 3:16). It is said of Christ repeatedly that He loved us and gave Himself for us. Love cannot be explained; it is however demonstrated in deeds (1 John 3:18). Love is demonstrated in commitment.

This is clearly revealed and beautifully so in the actions and words of Ruth toward Naomi. Ruth clave to Naomi (v. 14). This is the heart of love's commitment. Ruth's words are a confession of commitment. What she says to Naomi has become synonymous with a perfect confession of love and commitment. This relationship between Naomi and Ruth and Ruth's evident love for her is a picture of the believer's love and commitment to Christ. Her attitude and words are representative of the believer's understanding and appreciation of Christ and His Gospel.

There is much for us here.

The first thing to notice is that though Ruth's intent is to go with Naomi and it is clearly the desire of her heart, her words are not presumptuous. When Naomi bid her daughter-in-law to go back to her

land and her family, Ruth's words do not come across as obstinate. She bows to the will of Naomi. She does not say I'm going with you and that's all there is to it. She beseeches Naomi not to send her away. If we look at the miracles of our Lord we find that almost every recipient of His mercy desired to follow Him. Likewise, everyone who came to Him for mercy attributed sovereignty to Him—"Lord, if thou wilt." Those who desire to follow Him and have committed to do so, await His permission. If Naomi had forbid Ruth, there is no doubt that Ruth, because of her reverence for Naomi, would have turned back. Such is the case with every believer, with few exceptions. Some, whom the Lord delivered, were told to keep quite about it but they could not. When

Bartimaeus was told to go his way, he followed Christ. The believer is committed to following Christ but at the same time is committed to do what the Lord wills. What Naomi saw in Ruth was what our Lord sees in those who love Him, an unquenchable fire to be by His side. Note well that all that Ruth expresses has to do with one thing, her desire is to be with Naomi. Is this not the heart of the believer? Whatever awaits the believer is not an issue. His primary even singular desire is whatever comes it will be well if he can but be with the Master. "Whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge."

Ruth's commitment meant that she would have new relationships “thy people shall be my people.” The fact is that she would be leaving friends and family because of her allegiance to Naomi. Her love for Naomi would cost her all that she knew of familial relationships. Not only this, it meant that she would form new relationships. Though this is not always the case, and though a believer may not lose his family or be required to leave them, he must be willing to do so (Luke 14:25-27; Ps. 45:10-11). Our Lord said “Seek out godly companions.” To be near Christ, ultimately means natural family is not a consideration (Matt. 12:49-50) .

Ruth's commitment to Naomi also requires her to leave her gods, the deities to whom she prayed and those she worshipped “and thy God my God,” This is not small thing, but if she is to be with Naomi, her gods must be abandoned and forsaken. There is no other way. This is difficult but if we are to be with Christ, if we are committed to Him we must abandon all our former religion. We can no longer worship at the altar of freewill or works or at the altar of a god who is incapable of ruling His creatures. If we are committed to Christ all rivals to Him are to be disallowed and discounted. To hold on to these or to seek to form a mixture is revelation of want and lack of love and commitment to Christ (Rev, 18:4; 2 Cor. 6:14-7:1; 5:17).



Ruth's commitment was for life. "Where thou diest, will I die." Christianity is not a "tack-on." It is not a contingency plan for escaping hell. It is Christ to the death. Love's commitment is for life (Luke 9:62). This passage is also a beautiful representation of the believer's understanding of the Gospel, of what took place on Calvary. Where Christ died, the believer died (Gal. 2:19-20; II Cor. 5:14; Romans 6:11). It is the lifelong commitment of the believer to glory in the crucifixion of Christ because there Christ died and so did He (Gal. 6:14). The believer's faith is to the end (Phil. 3:13-14).

Ruth's commitment to Naomi was such that she even wanted to be buried with her. Humanly speaking this was as far as she could go, "there will I be buried." Ruth knew that she could stay with Naomi no longer than for both of them to end in a common grave, but her love for her would allow no other way. Ruth's allegiance to Naomi ended in a common grave plot. The believer's love for Christ began in a common grave. We confess that we were buried with Him in Baptism (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12). Read Text (vv. 16-17). This is the believer's confession of faith.

## HARVEST

22, So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.

Ruth 1:22

There is a wonder to the scriptures as the Lord continues to open them up to His people. There is a calm that enters the bosom when we are given faith to rest in the work of Christ and there is an outpouring of praise and thanksgiving to God when we begin to see that providence, sovereign providence, has been ordered for our cause. We can join with old Bunyan and rejoice that prisons are palaces when our Lord is with us there. That all things work together for good is doctrinal truth learned early on in the Gospel, but experience is the teacher of Romans 8:28, and scripture is a constant reminder of the wondrous governing and manipulation of time and tide, of flora and fauna, of human and animal—of absolute sway over all genus, phylum and kingdom for the eternal welfare of the elect.

In our text we see that Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem Judah at the time of the barley harvest. Divine providence had ordered famine in Israel so that Elimelech took Naomi and his sons to

Moab. Another famine struck, but not in Israel. He who holds the breath of every creature in His hand took the breath from Elimelech and his sons and left Naomi with a famine of family. Stripped of everything, brought to poverty and destitution, Naomi's heart had been prepared for seed. When the good tidings came that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread, Naomi's response was immediate. She left the house of woe to return to the house of bread. Her return was at the time of harvest. This is when all the elect return. Paul, speaking of preachers said we plant and water but the Lord gives the increase. The time of the barley harvest was the time of the feast of first fruits and thus pointed to the work of Christ in the salvation of the elect. The barley was the first grain harvested. It was not considered the best grain for making bread. It was often fed to the beasts.

The bread made from it was flat bread, considered of no great value by the world, yet it was often the only sustenance of the poor. It was a piece of this flat bread that, in a dream, gave Gideon the encouragement to do battle with lamps and bowls and defeat the enemy and deliver Israel. It was barley that was the offering of the accused wife when the law of jealousies was employed. Barley was meager fare but suggested, not its true value, but the perceived value to the world. Barley pictures Christ, as perceived by the world. They cannot see

His value. They think Him to be the bread of poor and ignorant, the crutch of weakness. But to the poor, the wretched, the outcast and those dying of hunger, barley flat bread is the feast of kings; Christ is the bread of heaven who feeds me till I want no more.

For the hungry, there is no waiting for the harvest of wheat. The bloom on the first barley reed was the promise of food. For the poor, the word that the barley is being harvested is the news that the famine has ended. The elect do not come home in the time of plowing or the time of sowing or the time of watering, they come home at the time of the barley harvest.

When the US government gave the tribes whom they had discarded and isolated on reservations flour and salt, they felt they were giving them the bare essentials. But from that flour came the feast of kings. Fry-bread was sustenance but so much more. It became the delicacy that it is today, and in that bread is the history of the people. That bread, perceived as nothing by the world, is the source and sustenance of history, and family, and fellowship. Our sweetest celebrations are those when we eat that which is counted as nothing by the world. Is this not the fellowship of the Gospel, the worship of Christ as the despised bread but the single thing that binds us that speaks to our history, our family,

and our food in this world? Naomi came home at the time of the barley harvest.

This time was the time of the feast of firstfruits (Lev. 23:10-11). If we look at the NT we see that this time of Naomi's return, the time of the barley harvest, the time of the feast of first fruits is symbolic of the resurrection of Jesus Christ (1 Cor. 15:20; Col. 1:18).

This being the case, this time of harvest pictures our resurrection in Christ and new life in Him. It pictures the Gospel Age, the time of the harvest of the elect. Christ used this time of the year to declare this truth (Matt 13:37-39; Luke 10:2; John 4:35). As those in the Promise Land waved the first fruits with joy before the Lord. so the disciples rejoices in the resurrection of Christ, the first fruits of the harvest of the elect souls (Luke 24:50-53). They rejoiced to wave the first fruits before the Lord. They preached the Gospel saying "He Is Risen" (Acts 4:10; 2 Tim. 2:8). Our new birth is our resurrection from the dead and our guarantee of our participation on the last resurrection. We are a kind of first fruits (James 1:18; Rev. 20:6).

This feast was held on the first day of the week. Our Lord rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Believer's gather on that day to worship because it is called the Lord's day throughout the New Testament. The Feast Of First Fruits speaks of our justification before God (Lev. 23:11; Romans

4:25). The Feast Of First Fruits teaches us that there is an expectation of more to come. If there is a first, there is a second. We were raised from the dead in regeneration and we will be raised to eternal glory in the last resurrection (1 Cor. 15:12-13, 20-23).

Finally, turn to 2 Sam. 21:1. This is the only other time the words “the beginning of the barley harvest” are found in Scripture is in verse 9. This portion of scripture points us to the sacrifice of Christ. V. 1—Saul sins against God in killing the Gibeonites with whom God had made a covenant. Judgment fell on Israel for 3 years in the form of famine. Before the curse was to be removed, justice must be satisfied (vv. 4-9—a just atonement required). Silver and gold will not satisfy (v. 4, 1 Peter 1:18-20). Man sinned and man must die. Seven men typify perfect sacrifice (Heb. 10:1-9). The sacrifice made on the “hill of the Lord” (v. 9), at the beginning of the barley harvest, the time of the feast of first fruits. Mephibosheth was spared because of the covenant. Justice satisfied = curse lifted (v. 14). Satisfied Justice = reconciliation. Naomi returned at time of barley harvest.

## HOME AGAIN

19, So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, Is this Naomi? 20, And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me. 21, I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty: why then call ye me Naomi, seeing the LORD hath testified against me, and the Almighty hath afflicted me?

Ruth 1:19-21

The ways of God are passed finding out. What He is doing at any given time cannot be known. I have been convinced for some time now, that it is best that we do not know what God is doing. It is enough to know that He does all things well, and that His purpose is perfect and will come to pass. We get into trouble when we, as finite beings, endeavor to analyze the infinite. What we can do is look at the record that God has given us and be sure that everything worked out precisely as he has planned.

That God, Himself, is the first cause of everything would keep us in perfect peace. But that will not happen as long as we struggle with our own unbelief and guilt. Even this is best for us and is working for our good, because ultimately our unbelief and guilt

so utterly strip us that we find ourselves feeling for the threshold of mercy's door. I heard Barnard pray once "Lord, do whatever it takes to bring us and keep us at the feet of the savior." I confess that my prayers do not often reach to a place of such honesty. Though I may not be able to pray thusly, I know, according to the word of Go, that whatever it takes to bring us to Christ is precisely what God will do to and for His elect.

Naomi was not a victim of circumstance or a recipient of the dark hand of fate. She was the object of divine love and mercy and the footsteps that she took that put her in the land of woe were but part of the pathway laid out for her from all eternity to bring her "to an expected end." Her story is the diary, the journal of every one of the elect. From Adam unto this day, the redundant testimony of every blood bought sinner is "the Lord has brought me home again."

There is a great treasure trove of understanding in the words of this beloved saint. The first thing that is before us is the reaction of the people of Bethlehem upon Naomi's return. They were surprised by what just a decade had done to her. The question asked suggests that there was visible change in Naomi's appearance. The language, the manner in which it was asked does not suggest that they did not know that she was Naomi but rather that her appearance was so changed that the



question might more properly be rendered, “Can this be Naomi.”

The bloom had fallen from the rose. Trial and tribulation, though appointed by the hand of divine love and designed to bring us home again, results in changing us. Don Fortner, in his book on Ruth, quoted Scott Richardson as he described life. Scott said, “Life in this world ain't much. It begins with a slap on the bottom and ends with a shovel full of dirt in your face, and there ain't much in between except bumps and bruises.” Trials serve to cause the blush of youth to turn to the wrinkles of experience. Our abilities to enjoy the pleasures of earth diminish and it tells on our face. The old hymn says “Change and decay all around I see. O thou who changest not, abide with me.” Our forays and wanderings from the presence of God into the world that we think will make us full prove to be utterly empty and we are wounded, bruised and changed by the experience (Ecc. 7:29). The blessed chastening of the Lord always accomplishes its grand design (Heb. 12:5-11). Naomi's testimony was “I went out full, and the LORD hath brought me home again empty.”

Naomi's testimony is full of honest truth. She was a believer. She knew that what had happened in her life was painful. She did not speak in terms of glassy-eyed, no problems language. What the Lord does always results in joy and peace in the heart but it does not always make us happy. She honestly

appraised her feelings. She told those in Bethlehem not to call her Naomi which means sweet and pleasant but Mara, which means bitter. She is not speaking of her state of mind, nor is it a reflection of her thoughts toward God. She is speaking of her present estate. She clearly lays the blame for her estate on herself. She says “I” went out full. She went where she went having full confidence in what she possessed and likewise confident of a rosy future. Like Adam in the garden, when he ate of the fruit, he expected to profit by it. He went out full and he *did* gain but his gain was loss. The pleasant, sweet world that he thought would sustain him soon was found to be full of thorns and briars. What he gained was the bitter wail of conscience and the knowledge that everything good he had was now accompanied with the evil of sin. Call him no more Adam; call him sinner. Is this Adam, the crown of creation, made in the image of God (Romans 5:12; 3:10-19).

She likewise testified that what came her way was the just fruits of her doings. Because of the fact that she had left the Land of Promise for the land of woe, to bring her home again the Lord had testified against her, dealt bitterly with her, afflicted her. The reason we know that this is the tenor of her testimony is because of the immediate reason for her return. She came home because she was a child of God and she had heard that the Lord had visited his

people in giving them bread. She was coming to God “believing that he is and is the rewarder of them who diligently seek him.” She came home knowing that a relative could redeem her (2:1). She came home at the time of the harvest, knowing that good things awaited the poor at the time of harvest (Lev. 19:9-10; Deut. 24:19). With such faith, she would not now speak of bitterness except in the matter of an honest report of what happens when you take your eyes off of Christ.

Her confession was not only a record of her failure, it was also a reminder to all who when within the reach of her voice that confidence in this world always leads to bitterness.

She came home. By faith she came home. She came home changed by the hand of providence. She came because the Lord brought her. Her plan was to go out full but the Lord's plan was to bring her home empty. Notice that little conjunction “and “ in verse 21. She is not speaking as if providence was anything other than a single purpose. She didn't say “but the Lord brought me home empty.” She said “I went out full and the Lord brought me home again empty.” The entire matter of her salvation from ruin to recovery was a matter of course, divine predestinated course. There were some handfuls on purpose awaiting Ruth in the Promised Land. There was bread aplenty there and Naomi and Ruth's

portion awaited their return and God saw to it that they were hungry, and poor.

The lessons for us are sure.

1. The world will never satisfy, it may for a time, seem to make us full, but the world will *not* be the reward of grace. When you are brought home again, you will bring nothing of the world with you. The gate to eternal life is so narrow that you cannot enter with baggage. The world passes away (Ecc. 1:2-3; 1 Sam. 2:3-5 ; 1 John 2:15-17). Christ alone is riches untold.

2. Our painful experiences must be laid at the door of our own disobedience and failure. Our recovery entirely belongs to God. The beauty of the knowledge of sovereign providence is that we can properly see the hand of God, operating in, afflicting and overriding our poor decisions for our eternal good. To see the Lord's hand in our affliction is to bear up under them with grace and peace (Job 1:21; 1 Sam. 3:18; 2 Sam. 16:9-12). God will bring His elect home again empty, that they might be filled.

3. Remember grace when others suffer (Gal. 6:2). Remember God in affliction (Phil 4:12; Romans 8:28).

## CHILDREN'S BREAD

1, And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.      2, And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi, Let me now go to the field, and glean ears of corn after him in whose sight I shall find grace. And she said unto her, Go, my daughter.      3, And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers: and her hap was to light on a part of the field belonging unto Boaz, who was of the kindred of Elimelech.      4, And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.      5, Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?      6, And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:      7, And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.      8, Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:      9, Let thine

eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. 10, Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? 11, And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. 12, The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

### Ruth 2:1-12

The best place for a believer to be is at the foot of the throne of the Sovereign. It is a comfort to finally come to the place where we realize that all things are outside the purview of our control. The truest place of awe, worship and reverence is the revelation that our God is passed finding out. So magnificently planned and ordered is the working of the universe and time, that that which seems to the world as convoluted, are the interdependent events and

people fitting into and fulfilling their particular ordained niche. Divine absolute predestination is the comfortable repose of the assured believer. Having said that, it is also true that every individual is accountable to the Lord for believing the Gospel. If anyone is found in God's favor, it can only be attributed to God's grace. If anyone ends up in hell, it is his own fault. Though we are responsible for the salvation of no one, we are responsible, indebted to all men to preach the Gospel, without which no one will be saved. If a person is saved he must give glory to God for electing grace. If a person perishes he cannot lay any charge to God's electing grace.

Do not try to figure this out. Act upon what you know is your responsibility realizing that the cause and effect belongs to God. Beyond the restricted atmosphere of our little life-span is the meticulous purpose of the absolute sovereign. The world balks at this fact and is angered by what they cannot explain and further by what they cannot control. The believer often scratches his head and breathes a sigh of relief, knowing that his doings will not alter the purpose of God because even as he seeks to do right he also knows that his efforts are fraught with the taint of sin and self. What but grace, sovereign effectual grace will do for poor helpless sinners.

The poor know some very vital things. They know that they need help. They feel the pangs of hunger. They know that they cannot help themselves. They

know if they are to be helped it will be at the hands of a gracious benefactor. They know nothing of entitlement. They know only that they are dependent. They know that if opportunity is afforded to them to have food, to be helped, to be delivered they will immediately take advantage of it. The problem with religion is that they are burdened with the task of trying to make someone to be poor who feels that they have need of nothing.

The only way to do that is to force Christ upon men and give them a sense of entitlement to the world to come. That is accomplished by making salvation a thing that can be added to one's portfolio and will enhance what that person already has. This is accomplished by appealing not to need but to greed. The trick is to make greed sound like need. The manner of doing this is simple. You apply to greed effectually by the threat of loss and the promise of gain. This is the algebra of false salvation and it works well as is clearly seen in its results.

The Gospel does not work for religion because it addresses true need, spiritual need and it does not appeal to the flesh. The poor in spirit are not looking for an enhancement to their life; they are looking for life. They are not looking for a leg-up, they are looking for a leg to stand on. One might ask the question "Did not Ruth go to Bethlehem to fill her natural hunger?" The answer to that is yes and no. Yes she was hungry for bread but no she did not go



to Bethlehem for bread. She went to Bethlehem because she loved her mother-in-law. She went to Bethlehem because she had disowned her former existence, even her gods. Her great testimony makes no mention of bread. She spoke thusly not because her belly was empty but rather because her heart was full. Her great and memorable declaration of love was not about bread but about the source of bread. It was not that bread had been found in Bethlehem but that God was in Bethlehem, that He had visited His children and the result of that visit was bread. Ruth did not say, “your bread will be my bread.” She said “your God will be my God.” Her trip to Bethlehem was a spiritual sojourn. Unbeknownst to her, she had been sought out, chosen to salvation and chosen to be the grandmother of her savior. She was doing what sought out sinners do. She was seeking the Lord. She was seeking with all her heart and she would find him. Family, friends, hearth and home, religion and gods were not in all her thoughts. She is the very picture of a sinner who needs Christ. This is the teaching of these first twelve verses.

Ruth's hope was a singular hope. Her only hope was a kinsman redeemer, one who had right to redeem her (v. 1). This book is called the “Book of Ruth” but the center and theme of this book is Boaz, the kinsman redeemer. Like every other book in the word of God, it is about Christ. The first word of this chapter is “and” vitally connecting us with the last

verse of chapter 1 and gives us the true gist of Naomi's interest. She came home in the time of the harvest of poor men's bread and the next thing we find is a description of what truly awaited her and the true nature of her need. According to the law, one who had the right to redeem was there. His name was Boaz, and that name means "strong" (Zeph. 3:17; John 17:2; Heb. 7:25).

Ruth knew that she needed a redeemer (v.2). She knew because Naomi had told her of Boaz and his power to save. She did not desire to go to the fields of Boaz thinking that no good might come of it. She knew if she went she would find grace (v. 2b; Heb. 11:6). Naomi's response was born of her knowledge of Ruth's resolve. She had tried to turn Ruth back before but it was to no avail. The best thing that you can do for a seeking sinner is to get out of their way. Naomi said, "go, my daughter." When she was in Moab, she didn't know that her husband was on his way to meet her, but he was. She didn't know that she would become a member of a family and gain a mother-in-law that would win her heart, but she did. She didn't know that she would be stripped of all she had and made to love the God of Naomi, but she would. She didn't know that there was a redeemer awaiting her arrival in another land, but there was. Blessed is the person who is a victim of gracious providence. Grace chose her. Grace stripped her and grace saved her.

Providence is not done with Ruth yet (v. 3). Her “hap” was to light on the field of her redeemer. I just love the way things happen. Was this a chance encounter? Was it serendipity? Was it good karma? No, it was Biblical chance (Ecc. 9:11). Biblical chance is providence suddenly revealed to the seeking sinner. For her it seemed a wonderful “hap” but this was no accident. In her ovaries was a single ovum that carried the chromosomes that would make up part of the 23 chromosomes that united deity and humanity. It's a “happening” for *sure*.

Seek the Lord and get ready for what happens. Do not despise the day of small things. Who can tell the importance of what might be called insignificant little occurrences? What kingdom might indeed fall for want of a nail? There is a science called chaotics. It theorizes that everything that takes place affects everything else. These scientists are searching the universe to find a formula to prove that the butterfly flapping its wings and stirring a bit of wind in Japan affects the entire course of human history. It ain't science and though I applaud their realizing that there seems to be order in this world of chaos, unbeknownst to them, they are seeking to discover the formula for predestinated providence. Every believer knows the formula (Rom. 8:28).

Ruth as a chosen vessel must meet her redeemer and the course that her life follows to that appointed

end is precisely and meticulously ordered. If you are His child your "hap' has been the same.

Years ago, when I ran the butcher shop, my mother-in-law, "Sis," worked for me. One of my customers was a black man, a blacksmith, who had a quick smile and a easy laugh. He brightened up the place when He came in. His hand was partially deformed from being wrapped around a hammer and pounding on an anvil. One day as he was leaving and saw my mother-in-law smoking a cigarette. He said to her, "I see that you smoke cigarettes." Sis, thinking that she was probably about to receive a reprimand, tentatively and maybe a little defensively said, "Yes." I was listening because I was wondering what was coming next. The old man smiled, tipped his hat off his shiny baldhead and said, "Well, bless the Lord." That day, that man made an indelible impression on my heart. That day it was my "hap" to eavesdrop on a conversation that resounded with wisdom and grace. Thank God for His great providence.

## REDEEMER

4, And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

5, Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? 6, And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: 7, And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. 8, Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: 9, Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn. 10, Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger? 11, And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me,

all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore. 12, The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

#### Ruth 2:4-12

It has been the “hap” of Ruth, ordered by sovereign providence, to fall upon the fields of Boaz. What follows in these verses is the record of the redeemer and his chosen. Sometimes we forget the romance of redemption and its attendant mercies. The work of the Holy Spirit, in part, reveals Christ to the mind and heart of the chosen in such a way as to make it impossible to resist the Savior. She is so taken with Him that she is enamored with every facet of His being. She is overwhelmed with His sacrifice for her, His withholding nothing from her, His giving her far above what she can think of ask. Religion presses and pushes men to follow Christ. They insert the hook in the mouths of men and women and persuade them to follow Christ by threat of punishment or promise of reward. The bride of Christ needs no such dark influence, she is in love and her singular interest is spending the rest of her life with the One she loves. I remember well the sad days of the turmoil of trying to be a Christian

without Christ. I remember the upbraiding of my conscience and the continual assault of the law and how what ought to have been wonderful was instead a constant state of anguish. All that changed when I heard the Gospel, when the Holy Spirit revealed Christ to me. The sweet liberty I realized removed the burden of religion and gave me the peace of pure rest. Having tasted the savor of the peace, nothing could make me seek to return to my former bondage.

Ruth has left all, seeking the grace of the One who is able and has the right to redeem. The Lord had created in her a need and a hunger for the true God. Now she is in the place where all that is ordained for her comes to fruition. She is where mercy and truth are met together and righteousness and peace kiss each other.

In verses 4-7 we see Boaz speaking to his reapers and his reapers to him. The subject of their conversation is Ruth. If you look at verse 8 when Boaz speaks to Ruth there is a pretty good indication that the conversation between him and the reapers was spoken in earshot of Ruth. She was intended to hear the conversation. It was intended for her to know the intentions of Boaz. Is this not the task of the ministers of the Gospel, to tell the prospective bride of the intentions of the Savior towards her? The Gospel is not about the bride; it is about the groom and is designed to cause the bride to know of

the benefits of a relationship with him. In these 4 verses several things are evident.

1. Verse 4 indicates that Boaz and his reapers were of one mind and one heart. They were one. This is the case with every believer and His Lord (Matt. 10:40 ; 1 Cor. 2:16)).

2. Verse 3 reveals the heart of the awakened elect. Ruth followed the reapers. She needs bread and the only place to get it was where the bread was.

When providence brings the sinner to hunger for Christ, the Spirit brings the sinner to where the bread is. The church, where the Gospel is preached is the house of bread and when the elect “hap” upon it they follow the reapers.

3. Verse 4 is the revelation of what takes place when the elect are brought under the Gospel. “Now. behold, Boaz came.” This is all the design of that blessed providence. The elect follow the reapers and the Lord come to them. It is in the field of the Lord, in his word, under the sound of His word that the chosen of God meet the Savior.

4. In verses 6-7 we see the reapers telling Boaz about Ruth, who she is, where she came from, and what she has done. This pictures the ministers of the Gospel, the Pastors speaking to the Lord about those to whom they minister. We live in an age where it seems that people find it easy to run down folks. I've heard pastors speak ill of those to whom they minister. But those who have been called of



God always come to Christ in prayer with a good report concerning the people. They likewise speak well of those to whom they minister.

Notice the directions that Boaz gave his reapers concerning Ruth (vv. 15-17). This is what the Gospel preaches does. He sets the table. He puts before the elect the feast of fat things, wine on the lees and well refined. The Gospel is “handfuls on purpose.” Preaching the Gospel is not telling sinners to do something or to tell them that God wants to do something but that the field is full of wheat on purpose and no harm will come to them as they take what God has fully given them.

The next thing we see is a personal encounter, Boaz speaks directly to Ruth. He assures her of His personal intentions toward her. He told her that she was where she belonged, that she was safe and that all her needs were met. He even courted her, drawing her to Him (v. 14). How gracious is our savior to bring us to Himself. He overwhelms His elect with the proof of His love (Ps 65:4; 110:3).

Ruth's response is the response of every believer (v. 10). Regenerated sinners are overwhelmed by the goodness of the Savior. Ruth could not believe her happy estate knowing her own unworthiness. The believer never graduates from this place. When we see our Lord we bow to the ground (Is. 6:1-5, Acts 9:1- 9). What is man that thou art mindful of him or the son of man that should visit him? Why was Ruth

chosen? Why are we chosen? We are chosen because God is gracious to whom he will be gracious. Grace never ceases to be astonishing to the believer (1 John 3:1). We who know that we are unlovable are continually amazed that God would love us (Jer. 31:3).

The Lord always assures us of His interest in us (vv. 11-12). Ruth has been brought to trust God and faith assures us of God's faithfulness. The result of faith is always the same (v. 17a). "So she gleaned."

## A PLACE IN THE CHURCH

4, And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee. 5, Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this? 6, And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said, It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab: 7, And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves: so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house. 8, Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens: 9, Let thine eyes be on the field that they do reap, and go thou after them: have I not charged the young men that they shall not touch thee? and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and drink of that which the young men have drawn.

Ruth 2:4-9

In these verses we see Ruth brought to the house of the man who will redeem her, supply all her needs and love her all the days of her life. She is brought to glean with the house owner's maidens. She is in

truth adopted into his family. This is a picture of a redeemed sinner being placed in the church. As I read this and thought of what Ruth had undergone to get here, I was reminded of the passage in 1 Kings 6 where the Lord set the requirements for building the temple. In verse 7 the Lord declares that every stone put in the building was chiseled, carved and cut to precise specs before it was delivered and placed in the building. This assured a perfect fit and also assured that no stone was missing—none were left over.

This is a proclamation that the church is a product of precise and particular redemption. Its make-up has been formed in the quarry of eternal election and predestination ere' the first lively stone was put in its preordained place. The reason for this precise manner of building the church is there would be no hammer, axe or any iron heard in the house while it was being built. For all practical purposes this house was not constructed with on-site workers. No sound of labor was heard. One stone was laid upon another without the noise and reverberation of human labor. It was a house whose glory for construction belongs to God.

And so it was with Ruth. From all eternity Ruth was chosen for salvation. Her time and place of birth was ordained. In the quarry of Moab, divine providence, the quarry master chiseled and cut this precious gem, stripped away all that she had

confidence in, and made her hunger and thirst for righteousness. The God of all grace created her need and when it was time to place her in the house, no sound of human work could be heard. Her hap was to be placed in the field owned by the redeemer. We preach the Gospel to every creature but we save no one and place no one in the church. It is in the invisible silent world of the Holy Spirit that the elect, having been prepared by providence in the quarry of grace, is placed in the house of the redeemer. All that can be said of such a wonder is "To God be the glory" (Acts 2:46-47).

In the verses of this passage in Ruth we see many things about Christ and His church. The first thing that is evident is that Ruth made use of the means available to her to get bread. She did this because she obeyed the word of God. She believed the promise of God. God had promised, by command that the gleaners of the field were to leave what falls to the ground for the poor so that they could freely eat. They were not employees of the master of the field. They were recipients of grace from the Lord of the master of the field and what bounty awaited the poor was theirs for taking and that by sovereign edict. She walked in the light that God gave her. Her faith in God caused her to act upon the promise, and she gathered more than she could imagine in her bag, even handfuls left on purpose. If you employ the word of God as a lamp to your feet and a light unto

you path, that path will lead you to Christ and His abundant harvest.

The next thing we see is what we don't see. Sometimes a thing omitted presents a powerful truth. The head of the reapers spoke Naomi's name. Boaz spoke Ruth's name, but only one name is prominent in this house. Even the head servant is not named, because he is just a servant. This is the house and field of Boaz and his is the preeminent name in this place. There is but one name that is the subject and substance of conversation in the house of God. The name that is above every name is the song, the melody, the lyric, the rhyme and the reason for all utterance in the church of the living God. We preach Christ and Him crucified. We do not recognize his servants—Apollon and Paul. By their own admission, they are nothing, but Christ is all. In this house only one bears the title of “holy and reverend.” In this house only one is worthy of the title Master.

Thirdly when one of the elect is saved he is brought home to the flock (Luke 15:4-6; John 10:15-16). Sheep are social creatures. They need the flock. If a sheep is found alone it is because it is sick or wounded. Ruth wanted the flock. She said to Naomi, “thy people shall be my people.” Believers need the church. I am suspicious of folk who talk about joining a church because they feel like they can help it out. The church is a *hospital* for sinners. It is a

*well* for the thirsty. It is breadbox for the hungry. It is sought out, entered, and resided in because of *need*. Believers don't attend to help, they come to get help. If providence has made you hungry, providence will guide you to the place where the bread is. What of those who believe grace but cannot seem to be part of an assembly? I have no answer, but I've never known one who has the joy of true and lasting fellowship who is not in the house of God, with the people of God worshipping the true and living God. There is where the sheep gather in one fold with one shepherd. The church is not an organization; it is an organism. It is not a business; it is a family. It is not a building; it is a body. Nothing is more detrimental to the heart and spirit of a believer than neglect of God's house (Hag. 1:4-6). Two things are found to be true concerning the members of the churches of God. Every member is a believer and every member has confessed Christ in baptism.

In this passage we also see the churches responsibility to the stranger, the newly placed one. The church ought to be like the house of Boaz. It ought to be attractive in spiritual things. When Ruth found herself in the house of Boaz, she found it to be a friendly, gracious and generous place. We preach the grace of God. It is the constant reminder of God's best bestowed on the worst of humanity.

It is the sweet benefaction of our benevolent Despot that gives joy, comfort and peace in the world

of woe. That same graciousness ought to be exhibited to all who enter the doors of this place. The poor in spirit who enter this place ought to feel that they can freely glean in the field of the Lord; that they can buy without money and without price; that when they are thirsty they can freely slake their thirst at the spring of living waters. They ought to know that here they are safe from reprisal or prejudice (vv. 9, 15). Here gracious words of benediction come from the Redeemer, "The Lord be with you" and words of praise are returned, "The Lord bless thee." Here the Redeemer condescends to notice the newly placed one. Boaz asked the reapers "Who is this young woman." The reapers had the answer because they represent the pastors of the church whose business is to know about those who are added to the church.

We see also that it is the Redeemer that makes the stranger feel welcome. He does so with sure promises. Boaz personally took upon himself the welfare of Ruth. He spoke directly to her and assured her that his being the Master that all would be well.

We also see that his words were spoken as a near kinsman, a close relative. He addresses her as his daughter. With this title he put her on a sure and high footing in his house. She was instantly a member of the family she did nothing to bring this glad estate about. All who come to God by Christ, in



faith, are instantly received as members of the family. There is no trial period. There is no watch care. There is no probation period whereby the newcomer is spied out to see if she meets the legal requirement of church membership. These are inventions of men designed to produce what they deem to be a worthy membership. When the elect find that they have hopped upon the field of the redeemer, the first words they hear are those of a full familial nature; "my daughter." They are accepted in the beloved and embraced by the church as part of the family, a member in good standing because their standing is perfect righteousness .

Finally, the newly placed convert is shown that all she will ever need is found in the house of the Master. She needed never to depart to find some needed spiritual blessing. Boaz tells Ruth "Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide her fast by my maidens." Here is bread aplenty; bread of heaven. Here is a well that never runs dry; the water of life. Here no weapon formed against you shall prosper. You will be hedged about and nothing can touch you save that which will do you good. Here in this place we bear one another's burdens, weep with those who weep, laugh with those who laugh. Here, as a family, we rejoice in our Lord. Let us all remain conscious of the truth that this place is the field of the Lord and the poor in spirit, those who hunger and thirst after

righteousness, those lively stones hewn in the quarry of grace and placed in the temple are welcome, loved, forgiven, encouraged, cherished and protected. Here the new convert will hear of the adventures, skill, purposes, deeds and accomplishments of the kinsman-redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Here, in this field, the family of God freely gleans what God has commanded to be theirs by law and they get handfuls on purpose by the grace of the Master.

## TRUE GRACE, TRUE RESPONSE

10, Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I am a stranger?

11, And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.

Ruth 2:10-11

The grace of God, like many terms and themes in the word of God, has suffered the neglect of worldly religion. The truths of redemption, justification, sanctification, mercy and righteousness have been placed squarely in the realm of human ability, power and inclination. They have been made to be things that God desires to do and wants to give but waits on the affirmative action of the will of man. Religion's god is hamstrung. He or she, according to who you speak to and their particular political persuasion, is nothing more than a prop for man's efforts to deify himself. What God freely and sovereignly grants, gives and bestows are seen as and reported as common commodities on the shelves of salvation's

supermarket. They are made to be offers, proffers and incentives geared to the enhancement of humanity's Adamic existence. These blessed truths have been sacrificed on the altar of personal commitment, emotionalism, sentimentality, will, personal righteousness and supposed obedience. Religion has made men to believe that grace is as easily disregarded as a simple decision. The Bible knows nothing of this human idea of grace. When grace is bestowed, grace saves. Where grace is shown, grace saves.

This passage is an accurate, even definitive portrayal of the grace of God and the precise response of those who have been the object of the unstoppable power of that sovereign, immutable and effectual grace. This grace arrives and brings everything needful with it. The gift of faith is by the act of grace. When grace comes. it comes to address faith. The Gospel reveals the righteousness of God from faith to faith. The response of Ruth in verse 10 is born of the grace revealed in verses 8-9. Grace comes with the declaration of what the recipient already possesses. Grace is the admonition to rest in the security of a perfect provision.

The Gospel does not say leave and serve; it says stay and eat (v. 8). The Gospel is the declaration that everything you need or ever will need is found where you ar. Religion lives and thrives on movement. The Christian life, according that religion, is a constant

struggle to get to a higher plane or a deeper understanding of self or finding a purpose, a calling, a place of importance in the world. The Gospel says *stand still* and see the salvation of the Lord. The works of the believer are ordained and at the appointed time they will meet and will be accomplished. The believer lives his life in a state of rest, in peace doing what people do, gleaning and eating and feeding others. For the most part it is a calm and uneventful life, not unlike the rest of the world, with one profound exception. The believer knows in his very soul that the entire universe is controlled by his redeemer, that nothing can molest him save by divine appointment and the whatever he needs is continually at his disposal. He knows that he makes nothing for himself but is, by connection to the vine, fully supplied with life and all that attends it. He can say and mean it from the heart that he is what he is by the grace of God.

How do the elect of God respond to the grace of God? Do they become pious and holy and seek to judge men? Do they set themselves up as the moral compass of society? In verse 10 we see the immediate and continual reaction of the sinner to the grace of God. Ruth has received grace. Her present is secure, her future is glorious and her past is forgotten. There is but one response that would follow upon such grace—wonder, thanksgiving and praise. Those who have tasted the grace of God have

heard and believed the good news are filled with a wonder that they never outgrow. Ruth was overwhelmed by the loving kindness of Boaz.

His gracious benevolence did not make her arrogant or presumptuous. Neither did his grace cause her to begin to bargain within her soul about how she might balance his goodness by being somehow deserving of his grace. When the elect of God are graced by the Lord, the redeemer, they ask why? Why would I receive such favor (v. 10)? She was not looking within herself for some modicum of goodness, or spark of worthiness. She looked to the redeemer, the one who possessed all, the one who held her life in his hands and wondered why he would condescend to show her grace. She had no thought of her worthiness but rather of the wonder of his goodness. What is man that thou should be mindful of him?

The response to grace is to take up headquarters in the dust. Ruth did not fall to the earth because she feared the wrath of Boaz, she took her place in the dust at His feet because she was overwhelmed by his goodness (Romans 2:4; Zech. 12:10). This is not planned or feigned posture. This is the heart touched by grace the response is the same for the king and the pauper (2 Samuel 7:18; 9:8). The recipients of grace never get over it (1 John 3:1). The answer to this humble query is found only in the source of the grace. Considering ourselves as

strangers to the promises and aliens for the commonwealth of Israel, why we were chosen, why we were called must remain in the chooser and caller (Ex. 33:19; Romans 9:15). Grace is not an offer. It is an astonishing wonder (Jer. 29:11; 31:3).

Finally, when grace comes to the sinner, it comes with assurance (v. 11-12). First is the assurance that you are known of God. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." The graced sinner is made aware that the God of all Glory is aware of him, has invested an interest in him. If God knows you in grace, He has always known you in this way and will always know you this way. He does not change; therefore (though you are utterly unworthy) you will never be consumed. One man said that God has invested too much in you for Him to ever lose you or let you go.

Also, a wonder of grace is that God honors the faith that He alone gives. This has always astonished me. How many times have we seen the Lord praise the faith of someone to whom He gave faith ("great is thy faith"; "thy faith hath saved thee"). God gave Ruth faith. God honored and rewarded the faith that He gave her. Salvation is all of grace (Eph. 2:8-9).

## FAITH'S REWARD

12, The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

Ruth 2:12

The words of Boaz refer to the reward that is given to Ruth because she has been made to trust in the Lord. Because of the abuse of the principle of rewards in this day one has to be careful to clarify precisely what the reward of faith is. In the man-centered faith of this day, rewards are for the most part temporal things such as health and wealth and material gain. Those things, according to the word of our Lord are things that are not even to be considered or sought after because they are what the world seeks after are merely things that inhibit a believer from seeking God. Those things are promised to the child of God, not in the sense of reward, but care and maintenance provided by God so that the believer can seek what is truly worthwhile (Matt. 6:25-33). Ruth has sought what was truly worthwhile. She has come to rest under the wings of the Almighty and that faith is rewarded.

The story of Ruth's faith is the story of the salvation of the elect. It begins on a sad note. Elimelech, the head of the family, took his family to



the place of ruin. He was like Adam. He was living in the Promised Land but left for what he thought were greener pastures. He left God and the worship of God for the land of idolatry. His act plunged his family into ruin. He and his two sons died. They left his wife and the wives of his two sons widows, poverty stricken and in a state of desolation. Naomi and Ruth returned to the Promised Land in faith, following the word of the Lord. They came home because there was a kinsman redeemer who could save them. Following the story, we have found the great providence of God setting all things in order for the purpose of glorifying his name and the name and work of His Son, our kinsman redeemer. All things are of God (2 Cor. 5:18; Romans 11:36).

Elimelech, what ever his personal reasons might have been, went to Moab by divine appointment. There was a Moabitish woman there, one of His elect, an object of God's love who must meet the redeemer. She was an heir according to promise and was part of the genealogy of Christ. Naomi came back home bitter but in a short time her testimony will be very different (4:14-15). Ruth's hap to light upon the field of Boaz was the hap of divine predestination by the God of order (Eph. 1:11; Romans 8:28). There was an expected and appointed end for Ruth, an end that would glorify Christ and save his people (Coll. 1:18; Romans 8:29-30). This book is about redemption. It is about the redeemer

and since He is the redeemer it is also about the redeemed.

Boaz pictures the redeemer in many ways. He is a near kinsman and therefore qualified to redeem. He is a mighty man (Heb. 7:25). He is a rich man, having the wherewithal to do what he intends (Eph. 3:8). He is a relative of Naomi and Ruth (Heb. 2:9-18). As a figure of Him who was to come, Boaz honored the Law in the redemption of Ruth.

First the law said that a near kinsman had the right to redeem the inheritance of his brother (Lev. 25:25).

Secondly, the relative, according to law, was to marry the widow of his brother to keep the name of his brother alive (Deut 25:5-10). He, who has redeemed the inheritance that our father Adam lost, is also our husband (Ruth 4:9-10).

There is also another aspect of the law represented and revealed in divine providence. Ruth was free to marry Boaz because her husband had died. Paul uses this very principle to show the believer's relationship with the law (Romans 7:1-4). All of this is a revelation of how Ruth was a believer and in our text Boaz declares that God will reward that faith.

In this passage we see that faith is not idle, it works. We know that faith in its standing in justification is the absence of work, of labor (Romans 4:1-5). Faith is the gift of God (Eph. 2:8-9). Faith is

accomplished in us by sovereign power (Eph. 1:19). Faith is the operation of God in our hearts (Col. 2:12). That being so, does not mean that faith is static. It is the living principle of grace in our new life. It works by love (Gal. 5:6). Love operates in the interest of the loved one, acting and reacting to need, always on behalf of the loved one. Faith is active (James 2:14-26). God declares that He will not forget our work of faith and labor of love (1 Thess. 1:3; Heb. 6:10). Ruth was a believer and acted as one. Because she had taken up refuge under the wings of her sovereign, she did what Orpah could not do.

In our text Boaz says to Ruth “The Lord repay your work and give you a full reward for your faith” (1 Sam. 2:30). What was her reward? Was it a little cabin in the corner of Glory? Was it a mansion on Gold Street in heaven? Her reward is the same as yours. She got a *new husband* who *redeemed* her and *loved* her, and put her in the lineage of Christ (Eph. 5:25-30). *Christ* is our reward (Gen. 15:1). The believer has forgiveness of all his sin because he has Christ (Is. 43:25). Your conscience is free from accusation because Christ is your reward (Heb. 9:12-14). God has made you worthy because Christ is your reward (Col. 1:12; Ps. 84:11).

“The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.”

## FELLOWSHIP

14, And Boaz said unto her, At mealtime come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and dip thy morsel in the vinegar. And she sat beside the reapers: and he reached her parched corn, and she did eat, and was sufficed, and left.

Ruth 2:14

In Brother Don Fortner's study on the book of Ruth, he drew several correlations between the book of Ruth and the Epistle to the Ephesians. These comparisons are worthy of our attention.

First in this book we have seen the wonder of the providential grace of God on behalf of His elect (Eph. 1:11). In the redemption and salvation of the chosen, God providentially controls time, tide and humanity for the good of his people and the glory of his name.

Secondly, as Ruth immediately entered the fields of Boaz upon her arrival in Bethlehem. those saved by grace are immediately laborers in the field of the Lord (Eph. 2:8-10; Titus 2:11- 15).

Thirdly, the calling of Ruth the Moabitess pictures the calling of the Gentiles (Eph. 2:11-13, 19).

Fourthly, The affection and love of Boaz toward Ruth is a reflection of Christ's love for His elect (Eph. 3:18-19; 5:25-27).

Fifthly, Boaz's purchase and redemption pictures Christ purchase and redemption of us (Eph. 1:6; 5:25). Sixthly, Just as Ruth was continually overwhelmed by the grace and love the Boaz showed her (v. 10), so the elect of God never get over the wonder of Christ's love (Eph. 3:8-11; 19-21).

Seventhly, the marriage of Boaz and Ruth was a loving, lasting and fruitful union. Likewise and more so our union with Christ is eternal and fruitful ((Eph. 5:30, 32; 4:21-25). As we continue in the study of this book, we should always seek to see Christ and His relationship to us.

In the passage before us we see Ruth taking a meal with Boaz and his laborers. Mealtimes in the word of God and in life are often seen in as a time of fellowship. When our Lord knocked on the door of the Church at Laodicea, He declared that he would come in and sup (or fellowship) with them when they left off their self-reliance and conceit and opened the door. A look at scripture reveals that the worship of God in the hearing of the Gospel is compared to feasting...the Word our feast (Isaiah 25:6) and faith pictured as eating and drinking (Luke 14:15-24). In the days of Boaz. at the time of the Barley harvest it was customary to set up a pavilion in the middle of the field and take a meal in the afternoon. To this meal Ruth was bidden to come and partake of the food with the fellow-laborers in the field. This

pictures our mealtime with our brothers and sisters in Christ.

There are three things that are immediately evident here.

first. Our God had given men to feed His people. The men that God has raised up to preach the Gospel are His gift to His people that they may be fed in this world (Jer. 3:15; John 21:15-17.) The Lord is the One who supplies the feast, the preachers distribute the food (Isa. 40:11). The victuals distributed by the preachers are knowledge and understanding. This knowledge and understanding is singular and realized only in Christ (1 John 5:20; I Peter 1:23-25).

Second. All those who hunger will be found at the table when mealtime arrives. Useless religion spends a great part of its time trying to convince self-satisfied people that that are hungry. The preacher of the Gospel does not coerce or pressure people to come to worship. A well-rigged false profession is still false. The minister of the Gospel sets the table and does so knowing that the hungry and the thirsty will come and dine. Those who are content in themselves. who are satisfied with the beggarly morsels on the world's table have no interest in and do not savor the value of the bread of heaven. It is useless to try to persuade them to come and it cheapens the Gospel to try to shove it down their throats. The table is set and the hungry will come

and feast and the thirsty will come and drink. Their need is what compels them.

Third. God has ordered certain mealtimes for His household. We know that throughout any given day we often find ourselves coming to the fountain of life. We often meditate upon the word and find ourselves in private worship. This is well and good. But the Lord had ordained the gathering of His people to dine together in public worship. In this day many disdain and despise any notion of ordered and set times for worship. The Lord declares that His people are to gather together at appointed times to worship Him. God has established the preaching of the Gospel and partaking of the ordinances for the good of His people (Eph. 4:8- 16; Heb. 10:25; 1 Peter 2:2). Mephibosheth sat at the King's table. The prodigal returned to his father's house to feast on the fatted calf. The believer comes to the Gospel table to feast on His Savior through the preached word. The Lord has prepared the table (Ps. 23:5). Naomi returned to the promised land with Ruth because she heard that the Lord had visited His people in giving them bread.

The words of this text teach us of the graciousness of our Lord. The word of Boaz to Ruth, by virtue of his lordship, could rightly be viewed as a command. However it seems more to be a gracious invitation and welcome. He did not say go and dine with my reapers but rather come and dine with my reapers and me. When she was bidden, she was

bidden to eat with the master. This was a generous and benevolent welcome. The gospel is a command but the elect hear it as a sweet invitation (Is. 1:18-20; Matt. 11:28-30; 22:9; Rev. 22:17). Boaz bid Ruth to dip her bread in the vinegar. This is not vinegar like we know it. We would know this as sop or savory gravy. This pictures not only the grace of the welcome but also the access into the grace wherein we stand. We have been redeemed and we are bidden, through the Gospel, to continually dip into the savory source of the excellency of the knowledge of Christ. We have been saved and we continue to take the cup of salvation (Ps. 116:13; Is. 12:2-3). Notice also that Boaz personally fed Ruth. What wondrous grace has brought this sinner to the feast of grace? What a privilege to sit with the reapers at the Master's table. But what can compare, what words can express what it is for the Master to "reach us parched corn. What munificent condescension is this that the master would hand-feed his beloved! The result would be, must be, utter satisfaction (Ps 22:26; 36:8; 63:5; 65:4).



## HANDFULS OF PURPOSE

15, And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not: 16, And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave them, that she may glean them, and rebuke her not.

Ruth 2:15-16

As we have seen before, this matter of the poor gleaning freely in the fields was according to the Law of Moses. The owners of the field were not allowed to harvest the corners of the field or to pick up the grain that fell to the ground during the harvest. These portions were for the poor and needy and they were to be freely allowed to glean these morsels for themselves. By decree, the corners and that which fell to the ground belonged to the poor as God had given them right to it. The poor and needy, the widows and the fatherless were designated throughout scripture and the objects of mercy (Jas. 1:27). This sets forth the glory of God as sovereign in His mercy and His grace and assures us that the spiritually poor and needy will be most certainly provided their needs by God.

In this passage Boaz pictures Christ as the sole proprietor of the field. He is Lord and it is his field. He has sovereign right to do what He will with His

own (John 17:2). Ruth represents all sinners saved by grace. Her life and the surrounding circumstances are representative of the sovereign manipulation of providence that ultimately brings all the elect to their appointed end. These divine orchestrations have made Ruth a picture of a "seeking sinner." The field represents the word of God, the Gospel of sweet successful sovereign grace. The young men, the reapers picture the preachers of the Gospel.

In this passage we see Boaz commanding his young men to leave handfuls on purpose for Ruth, just as the Lord Jesus command His preaches to drop truth on purpose for His chosen race. These two verses teach us what the seeking sinner and the preacher of the Gospel are to do in this life.

Ruth pictures a "seeking sinner." Though this is not necessarily a theological term, it is certain and is an evidenced fact in the word of God. Almost all the miracles that our Lord performed for people in the New Testament were performed for those who sought His help or for those in whom He saw a great need. Their physical need represented some aspect of their spiritual poverty.

Bartimaeus' blindness pictured the spiritual blindness of humanity. The man at the pool of Bethesda represented the impotence of the sinner and the inability of the law to help Him.

The Syrophenician woman pictures the inability of humanity to spiritually help another.

The lame man and the man with the withered hand picture the spiritual state of utter ruin and its pitiable condition.

The lepers represented the dead and the outcast. The deaf and the dead picture sinners who are unaware of their condition who are both shut up to the voice of Christ.

Ruth pictures the sensible, seeking sinner who out of great need and true hunger come to the house of bread. When she came to the field she came as poor and wretched and utterly dependent upon the kindness and grace of the Master of the field. She came as a gleaner, seeking bread (2:2-3).

Her estate gives us a sense of who and what the seeking sinner is. First, she is a Moabite. She was a member of a natural race that was under the curse of God. He had no rights save those that were accounted her as one who has no rights. She was a recipient of the privilege afforded to those in abject poverty. The right she was afforded had nothing to do with her heritage, her character or her conduct. She had a right to glean because God had freely left some stuff for the poor. This is our estate as we are born into the veil of tears. We are members of a cursed race (Romans 5:12; Eph. 2:11-12). The elect, by birth, have the same nature as those who will perish in hell (Eph. 2:3).

The only right we have is to what God has left in this world for sinners. The Gospel is preached to all, and needy sinners are allowed to glean in that field. Election and predestination prevent no one from gleaning in this field, but they assure that some will come, some will seek and when they come *with nothing* they will be freely allowed to take what is freely provided for them.

Ruth represents that seeking sinner because she has been brought to an estate of great need. She is a lump of Adamic clay that, in the hands of the potter, has been molded to be a vessel of mercy. She is not here by her decision. She is in the field because she has been decided upon. She had once been wealthy, married to privilege, married to Mahlon. She was the daughter-in-law of Elimelech. In this she represented every son and daughter of Adam. We were created originally as masters of the earth, but we fell into utter ruin. God hath made man upright but he has sought out many inventions. Ruth was *not* here by original choice but rather by divine appointment. She chooses this field now as the only choice of the desperate.

She does not have a number of delightful options before her that she may languidly make her decision. This is life or death and the command is to "Choose life." It is not a command that falls on deaf ears. It is a command that falls on ears that need to hear it. She now takes the place afforded her. For

her to partake as a gleaner she must assume the place of the poverty stricken.

*Every* gift that God has is for the poor, the needy. The poor, the needy have a resolve. They will go where the bread is; they will glean along side the ruined. They claim no place among the elite, the rich or the privileged, they gather with those who are in the same circumstance, an army of woe, gladly taking what the Master has left for them. Ruth's resolve, as it is with every ruined sinner, is to resolve to seek the Lord (1:16-7). The Lord has visited His people in giving them bread, and he has left some for the poor. I'm going there for my need drives my resolve.

Ruth admired the maidservants of Boaz (2:13). She knew she was not one of them, but she wanted to be. I can remember my poverty in religion. I can remember wanting to be like those, among those who spoke so freely of forgiveness, of acceptance before God. The world wants nothing of the children of God, but those who have been providentially graced, sovereignly manipulated to be utterly destitute and made aware of their despicable sin, long with all their heart to be like those who have been set free by grace and mercy. If it means that reputation, dignity and self must die, it is but a small price to pay for the eternal benefits to be gained.

I can but perish if I go,

I am resolved to try;  
For if I stay away I know  
I must forever die!

Perhaps he will admit my plea'  
Perhaps will hear my prayer;  
But if I perish, I will pray  
And perish only there.

In this passage we also see the preachers of the Gospel. They are compared to reapers. Through preaching the Gospel they reap the wheat and bind the tares of this world (Matt. 13:30; 16:19; II Cor. 2:14-17). The Gospel declared is the instrument of salvation as well as the instrument of condemnation. As reapers, they glean the bread of knowledge and understand and set the table for the people of God (Neh. 8:8; Jer. 3:15). It is the responsibility and privilege of those whom God has called to feed the sheep of God (Titus 1:5-9).

Finally, the instruction and commandment that Boaz gives to his reapers concerning Ruth mirror the commandments that Christ gives to His preachers concerning His children—His church.

First. He tells them to “Let her glean among the sheaves.” The preacher of the Gospel is not appointed to guard the word of God or determine how much of it or to whom it is to be given. Every word of God is true, and pure. Every doctrine is a treasure, not a hidden treasure to be meted out at

the preacher's discretion. No doctrine is to be deemed too controversial or confusing to be uttered (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Set the table and let the needy sinners glean all they want. All it can do is nourish them.

Second. The command was "Do not reproach her" (v. 15). This means, "Do not shame her." It is not the Gospel preacher's business to convict or chastise the people of God. That belongs to God the Holy Spirit. The preacher's job is to preach the Gospel. It is to *comfort* the people of God with glad tidings of good things (Is. 40:1-2). The preacher is not responsible for the application or the effect that the Gospel produces. The Holy Spirit takes the Gospel and comforts and convicts, chastens and consoles with one fell swoop.

Third. The commandment is "Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her." First, I think this means that the pastor is to be keenly aware of his congregation. He is to watch for them and seek to give them the word in season that will meet their particular and individual needs. The pastor is involved with the spiritual welfare of his people and is to know them so that he can see when something is amiss or when life is good. For the particular need he is to let fall some handfuls of purpose. Secondly, this means that the Gospel he preaches is about purpose. It is about the purpose of God in the salvation of sinners. The God he preaches is the God

who does everything on purpose. He does not speak of possibilities, of probabilities, of chance and luck. He speaks the Gospel of predestination, election, of particular and purposeful redemption. On purpose, by divine edict, the preacher of the Gospel lets fall handfuls of divine doctrine, glorious truths of sovereign purpose that will meet the need of seeking sinners.

Fourth. The command is repeated but in a more forceful manner and a stronger fashion "Rebuke her not." The people of God are just that. They are God's people! They do not belong to the church, or the pastor, or the teachers, elders of visiting evangelists. They belong to God and *He* will rebuke, if rebuking is necessary. Though pastors must sometime rebuke and reprove they are to exercise all longsuffering and patience, they are commanded to do it with a sure consequence (Titus 2:15). There is but one way that rebuke and reproof can be administered with such a result. That way is the declaration of the Gospel. lest it seems that it is the preacher's words and personal convictions and not God's word. The preacher ain't the hammer (Jer. 23:28-29). The preacher is not to personally rebuke. He is to speak the truth to the children as the objects God's love. They are to be treated with love, affection, to be cared for and protected with handfuls on purpose. The result of the declaration of the Gospel is that the believer, the



seeking sinner, the needy sinner will glean (v. 17). . .  
“so she gleaned.”

## QUALIFIED

20, And Naomi said unto her daughter in law, Blessed be he of the LORD, who hath not left off his kindness to the living and to the dead. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

Ruth 2:20

Throughout the NT our Lord is shown to be imminently qualified for the mission that He undertook. This is not only an exaltation of His character and purpose but also a declaration that the requirements that God had established for one to have the right to redeem were fully and precisely met by Christ. If these were not met then no redemption could occur. When Naomi spoke these words concerning Boaz, she was declaring that Boaz (and by type-Christ) met every qualification to be the redeemer. If the redeemer meets these qualifications then the redemption accomplished is true and real. The remainder of this book relies on this truth.

These things have little value in today's new-age approach to religion. Oprah Winfrey, beginning January 1, 2008, on her daily radio program offered a year-long course on the New Age Christ, in a lesson a day completely covering the 365 lessons from *A Course in Miracles* workbook. Listeners will be encouraged to buy *A Course in Miracles* for the

year-long course, and an audio version, recited by Richard Thomas, a.k.a. “John Boy” Walton, will be available on compact disc. Those who finish the Course will have a wholly redefined spiritual mindset, a New Age worldview that includes the beliefs that there is no sin, no evil, no devil. *A Course in Miracles* teaches its students to rethink everything they believe about God and life. It bluntly states: “This is a course in mind training” and is dedicated to “thought reversal.” In reality, *A Course in Miracles* is the truth of the Bible turned upside down. Oprah told her television audience that Williamson's book was one of her favorite books, and that she had already bought a thousand copies and would be handing them out to everyone in her studio audience. Oprah's endorsement caused Williamson's book to skyrocket to the top of the New York Times bestseller list.

*A Course in Miracles* is allegedly a “new revelation” from “Jesus” to help humanity work through these troubled times. This “Jesus” who bears no doctrinal resemblance to the Bible's Jesus Christ began delivering channeled teachings in 1965 to a Columbia University Professor of Medical Psychology, Helen Schucman. One day Schucman heard an “inner voice” stating, “This is a course in miracles. Please take notes.” For seven years she diligently took spiritual dictation from this voice that described himself as “Jesus.” Here are some quotes

from the “Jesus” voice of A Course in Miracles: “There is no sin;” “A slain Christ has no meaning.” “The journey to the cross should be the last useless journey.” “Do not make the pathetic error of 'clinging to the old rugged cross.’” ‘The Name of Jesus Christ as such is but a symbol. . . It is a symbol that is safely used as a replacement for the many names of all the Gods to which you pray.” “The recognition of God is the recognition of yourself.” “The Atonement is the final lesson he [man] need learn, for it teaches him that, never having sinned, he has no need of salvation.”

As of this week Oprah has begun an On-line class that involves many nations to teach from a new book that seeks to find true purpose. Numerous preachers no longer speak of sin and God's requirement of holiness but have reduced the Bible as one of many books in the self-help library.

The Bible however, has withstood the attacks of every imaginable psychology, pathology and neurosis and remains the Word of God—infallible and inerrant. Redemption is one of the cardinal tenets of Scripture and the qualifications of the redeemer are ordered from the God of justice and righteousness. If Christ does not meet every qualification then there is *no* redemption, and all that is left is to invent new ways to make Adam a more socially acceptable sinner. If Christ meets these qualifications then there *is* redemption.

What are the qualifications? Read Leviticus 25:25-28, 47-48. Those verses deal with the redemption of property and persons. The right to redeem follows three basic requirements.

1. Kinship.
2. Ability or wherewithal.
3. Willingness to redeem.

Christ *is our kinsman* by His incarnation. He is *able to redeem* because He is the God man. He is a *willing redeemer* (Heb. 12:1-2). The meaning of the word “redeem” is to buy back or buy again. Redemption requires the eviction and dissolution of all rights of the former possessor and also requires that the redeemer take full, personal possession of that which is redeemed.

Redemption presupposes a specific need, a sad and desperate condition. This condition is utter helplessness, poverty, and impotence to change one's estate. It presupposes that any relief of the condition be accomplished entirely outside of the one in need. Naomi's estate precisely pictures this estate. These things also picture the woeful spiritual condition of every elect son of Adam (Ps. 49:6-9). Only Christ could meet the requirement necessary to redeem such ruined sinners (Romans 3:24-26; Gal. 3:13; Eph 1:7, 14). Boaz pictures Christ in this blessed book of Ruth (Read Ruth 4:1-10).

Several things reveal Christ to be the perfect redeemer.

1. The redeemer must be a close relative and that by divine appointment. Only one appointed by God has the right to redeem. Christ is that Redeemer (John 10:16-18; Heb. 10:5-14).

2. The one who is to redeem must be a close relative (Heb. 2:10-13).

3. The kinsman redeemer must, himself, be entirely free of debt [sin] (Heb. 7:26-27).

4. The rightful redeemer must be able to redeem. He must have the price required to meet the requirements of law and justice (1 Peter 1:18-20).

5. The rightful redeemer must be willing to redeem (Phil 2:5-9; Isaiah 50:5-7; 53:7,9).

6. The rightful kinsman redeemer must execute a particular, effectual redemption. It is designed only for his kinsman. Boaz redeemed no one but the relatives of Elimelech. There can be no universal application of redemption unless all who are in the universe are redeemed. If one for who the redemption price is paid should end up not to be the purchased possession of the redeemer, then that is not redemption at all and the redeemer is no worthy to bear that title. Christ, our kinsman redeemer, has restored what He did not take away (Ps. 69:4). Christ has redeemed His people (Rev. 7:9).

7. Finally, the one who is the rightful redeemer must raise up a seed. Christ has raised up a seed (Is. 53:10-12). They are His chosen seed (Ps. 22:30-

31; Ruth 4:5-6). Christ is our rightful kinsman redeemer because he has met every requirement.

## AT THE REDEEMER'S FEET

1, Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her, My daughter, shall I not seek rest for thee, that it may be well with thee? 2, And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor. 3, Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking. 4, And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do. 5, And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do. 6, And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade 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 corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down. 8, And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet. 9, And he said, Who art thou? And she answered, I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid;



for thou art a near kinsman. 10, And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shewed more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich. 11, And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman. 12, And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I. 13, Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, that if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, as the LORD liveth: lie down until the morning. 14, And she lay at his feet until the morning: and she rose up before one could know another. And he said, Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor. 15, Also he said, Bring the vail that thou hast upon thee, and hold it. And when she held it, he measured six measures of barley, and laid it on her: and she went into the city. 16, And when she came to her mother in law, she said, Who art thou, my daughter? And she told her all that the man had done to her. 17, And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother in law. 18, Then said she, Sit still, my

daughter, until thou know how the matter will fall: for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

### Ruth 3:1-18

What we have seen from this blessed book is the story of our salvation. The theme of this book is two fold. This is the story of the redeemer, the one who has the right to redeem, the near kinsman. This is also the revelation of the unseen and gloriously effectual sovereign providence of God that through manipulation of people, time and tide brings the poor sinner to the feet of the savior. This is the story of the fall of humanity as a result of a man whose name means, "God is my King", leaving the promise land for the dregs of paganism. When Elimelech made this sad choice, he did not go alone. He took all his family with him (Romans 5:12). Naomi and Ruth picture Adam and his offspring who went out full but came back empty. Naomi and Ruth came back to Bethlehem (the house of bread) because in their state of poverty they heard good news, glad tidings of good things. They heard that back home in the promise land the Lord had "visited his people in giving them bread." Providence had ordered events to bring them to hunger and sent someone to tell them that there was bread aplenty in the place that they had left.

Naomi and Ruth's need was not only for bread. Naomi, because of the actions of Elimelech had lost

everything and if she was to be recovered from her ruin, she (according to the law) needed a redeemer, a near kinsmen who could justly and rightly buy back all that she had lost. Ruth, according to the law, needed a husband to raise up seed in the name of her deceased spouse. When Naomi and Ruth returned, Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz, her near kinsmen, and was graciously bestowed handfuls on purpose. The fields of Boaz picture the word of God where the child of God gleans food for his soul. Boaz' action toward Ruth picture our Lord's care for His elect. He took notice of her (John 15:16), issued orders that she was not to be molested (Is. 54:17; Romans 8:28), set up his men to watch out for her and made sure that she had more that she could think or ask. In the end of the story he married Ruth and from their line came the Lord Jesus Christ. This all was according to God's great plan of redemption (Eph. 1:3- 7; 2 Tim. 1:9). Our salvation is ordered in all things and sure (John 17:2).

In this chapter of the story of redeeming love we see Ruth coming to Boaz in the manner *prescribed by Naomi*. This is as pure a definition of how a sinner is to approach Christ as is seen anywhere in scripture. Here Naomi represents the motherly aspect of the church. She gave wise counsel to Ruth and her counsel extols the grace of Christ (vv. 1-4).

The first thing to notice is the counsel that was given was for the welfare and rest of Ruth. The churches interest in sinners is not another name on the role. Her interest is spiritual and she desires sinners to know the savior.

Secondly, the language employed by Naomi strongly suggests that she had confidence in the Redeemer and was sure what the Redeemer would do. We preach the Gospel; fully confident that the Savior will cast out none that come to Him. The language also assures us the Naomi knew that she could not presume upon Boaz. Her instructions were for Ruth to lay at the Redeemer's feet and that He would tell her what to do. Every seeking sinner comes to Christ believing that he is and that He is the rewarder of them that diligently seek Him. The sinner also knows that this is not some sort of entitlement. Salvation belongeth to the Lord. He will be gracious to who he will be gracious and show mercy to whom He will show mercy. The sinner is ready to fall at the feet of Christ and wait for Him to speak peace is He is so inclined. For a sinner to die at the feet of Christ seeking mercy is to die as a sinner never died. Thirdly, she was told to go where the Boaz could be found, the threshing floor. The threshing floor is a metaphor for where the Gospel is preached, the assembly of the saints, the church (Luke 3:17; 2 Cor. 2:14-17). If a sinner is to hear the voice of the Savior, he will have to be where his voice

is heard, in the Gospel, in the midst of His gathered people (Matt. 18:20; Zeph. 3:14-20).

Here, in the actions of Ruth, we see the willingness of an awakened, needy sinner to do what ever it takes to be found in the favor of the Master (vv. 5-7). Ruth's simple obedience required bowing to the will of the redeemer. Like the harlot who washed the feet of Christ and anointed Him for His burial, the record of inspiration declares that "she did what she could." Ruth's action was to venture all that she was, her future, everything on the goodness of Boaz. Perhaps as you have read this you have thought that the actions of Ruth seem somewhat inappropriate. Here we have a woman coming in under the cover of darkness, having washed and perfumed herself, quietly and stealthily lying down at a stranger's feet with the intent and desire that he would marry her. What this teaches us is that the seeking sinner disregards reputation, accepts the fact that ridicule might well ensue but all is laid bare for the sake of the master's regard. Sinners willingly suffer humiliation to be found in The Masters favor.

In verses 8-9 we see the sinners confession. When Boaz was startled by what Ruth did, he said, "who are you?" Her reply was bold and courageous, "the kingdom of God suffereth violence and the violent take it by force." She said, "I am Ruth." She knew that He knew her name because "the Lord knoweth them that are His." The woman at His feet

had besought His favor before (2:13). The woman at His feet had found grace in His sight. The woman at His feet had received his kindness and his protection and handfuls of sustenance on purpose.

Ruth had come to him in darkness, and to the position of a slave. She had *not* come as one who felt that former kindnesses entitled her to present blessing. She came as a *maidservant*, a word that can mean female slave or even concubine. She came and asked him to cover her with his garment. She came because she had been told to come, but Naomi is not with her now. It is always one on one in the matter of salvation. When she asked to be covered she declared “I am yours, do what you will” (Ezekiel 16:8). She came believing that he alone was able to remedy her awful estate (Matt. 8:2). She knew that He was the one who had the right to redeem “near kinsman” (See margin).

The response that Boaz gives is from “lips dripping with grace.” To the Moabite woman whose race was cursed by God, the redeemer said be it unto thee as thou wilt. You are kind and generous and a virtuous woman. You did not chase others whether rich or poor. Boaz loved Ruth and his words of proposal were words of intent, “Stay with me” and tomorrow I will do what you have asked.

Boaz was a willing redeemer, but thee was something more important that must be settled before he could redeem Ruth and take her for his

wife. There was a kinsman that had first right on her redemption and that issue must be executed before he could justly redeem her. The Lord Jesus Christ could not redeem us unless the law and justice of God was satisfied. No one is redeemed whose sin has not been punished. God must be honored in the salvation of the sinner. He cannot forgo His wrath and justice to save a sinner. If I'm to be redeemed, God must be just to redeem me (Prov. 16:6; Romans 3:24-26). Grace and mercy fly on the wings of satisfied justice.

Ruth was a believer. She believed in Boaz and she received faith's reward. When she heard Naomi tell her what to do she said "I will." When Boaz heard her desire he said "I will." There are two "rests" revealed here.

Naomi's desire was for Ruth to find rest. She found the *rest of faith*, the rest wrought in belief. She lay down at the master's feet and slept there all night.

There is another rest. Boaz would not rest till he had *justly redeemed* Ruth.

Boaz met her every need. He gave her his heart. He gave her His name. He gave her grain that he had threshed, pure grain without chaff. She had him, and he had her (SOS 6:3). When Ruth returned home, Naomi assured her of Boaz's faithfulness (3:18; Phil. 1:6; 1 Thess. 5:24). This wonderfully

pictures what our Lord has done for us in grace and mercy.



## THE SHOE

1, Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, 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 ye down here. And they sat down. 3, And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: 4, And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. 5, Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. 6, And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it. 7, Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked

off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.

Ruth 4:1-7

4, Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn. 5, If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her. 6, And it shall be, that the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel. 7, And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say, My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name 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 unto him: and if he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her; 9, Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house. 10, And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed. 11, When men strive together one with another, and the wife of the one draweth

near for to deliver her husband out of the hand of him that smiteth him, and putteth forth her hand, and taketh him by the secrets: 12, Then thou shalt cut off her hand, thine eye shall not pity her.

### Deuteronomy 25:4-12

Notice again 4:5. “Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.”

The *seed* in scripture is of paramount importance. It speaks to the person of Christ, the Messiah, throughout the Old and New Testaments. The preservation of the natural lineage of Christ addresses the spiritual lineage of Christ and all who are born of His travail. The Bible is replete with references to the importance of the seed. From the protoevangelium [“first” “good news” or “Gospel”] in Genesis 3:15 where Christ is the “seed of woman” who will bruise the serpents head, to Abraham believing God concerning the *seed* and it being counted to him for righteousness in Genesis 15:6, to Tamar playing the harlot to Judah and being counted more righteous than him because she had respect for the seed, to the suffering substitute seeing His seed in Isaiah 53, to the seed of woman being born into the world in Bethlehem, born of a woman, born under the law to redeem them that are

under the law, to the Gospel and the preaching of it in 1 Peter and James 1, the scripture is one long and beautiful treatise on the *seed*. “For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us” (2 Corinthians 1:20).

In this passage in Deuteronomy it is declared that the seed must be *preserved* and *continued*. When a woman is married to a man and he dies before the birth of the firstborn (representing Christ) then the brother (or next kinsman) of the woman's dead husband is to take the woman as his wife and the first born of that union will bear the name of the former husband. Though it is not clearly set forth in this passage, it was commonly understood that this scenario was followed until a firstborn son could bear the first husband's name. So if the second, third and so-on husband died, the process continued until the seed was honored and the lineage of the firstborn was established. At the time our Lord walked the earth, the Sadducees, who denied the resurrection, tried to use this law to trip up Christ concerning the resurrection (Matt. 22:23-33). Their interest was not in the seed but in proving that what they believed discounted the resurrection.

With God, this matter of preserving the seed is of absolute importance and the refusal to honor the principle declared here can result in dire consequences (Gen. 38:7-10). Needless to say, this is finally and fully realized in the person and work of

Christ as is revealed in the preaching of the Gospel (Romans 8:29; James 1:18).

In our text there is not only the doctrine of the preservation of the seed but also the punishment and shame that is involved for the next kinsman who refuses to do as the Lord commands (vv. 7-10). If the nearest kinsman refused to marry the widow then he was brought before the elders of his city and was made to confess and own the fact that he refused to do his duty (v. 8). After this confession of refusal occurred the widow of his brother then publicly removed the shoe of the unwilling kinsman and spit in his face to publicly humiliate him and cause his name and his family's name to be a name of scorn and embarrassment the remainder of his days (vv. 10). This action of the widow revealed the nature of men in their disobedience to God (Isaiah 1:6).

The understanding of this principle comes to light in the book of Ruth as Boaz (the near kinsman) confronts the nearer kinsman concerning the redemption of the name of Mahlon the son of Elimelech. Mahlon had died and left Ruth a widow and in order for his name and seed to remain the near kinsman must marry her. Now Boaz was a near kinsman but not the next in line and this must be remedied before Boaz can marry Ruth (Ruth 3:12-13; 4:4-8) .

We know that Boaz is a type and picture of Christ, our kinsman redeemer. As we compare this passage with what we have read in Deuteronomy, several things differ that reveal the difference of law and grace. In our text in Deuteronomy, the kinsman refuses to marry the widow and continue the name of his brother. The result is shame and disgrace. In the story of Ruth, the nearer kinsman does not refuse to marry Ruth but rather declares his inability to redeem because it would mar his inheritance. However in the reason given, the marring of the inheritance, there is the element of refusal. In Deuteronomy the *widow takes* the shoe from the kinsman, in Ruth *the kinsman removes* the shoe *voluntarily*. In Deuteronomy the kinsman's shoe is removed *before the widow*, in Ruth the shoe is removed *before the redeemer*. In Deuteronomy the widow must personally deal with the kinsman. In Ruth the transaction is between the nearer kinsman and the kinsman redeemer.

What does this teach us concerning our redemption?

First, the nearer kinsman is the law which cannot redeem us, but also asserts that it is not willing to. The law, by design, was never given to redeem or buy back anyone. Its function is to reveal guilt, and because it is holy and just, the law cannot take a sinner to itself. It must ever stand on the outside having no possibility of intimacy, rather

accusing and assigning blame with incontrovertible evidence showing that no one is worthy to stand in its presence. If the law, being holy, were to embrace the sinner then the law would be *marred* and its justice diminished. The law can only exact punishment. Though the law is presented as our former husband in Romans 7, that only applies to the matter of dominion and that in reference to the dominion being removed when the law dies. In our text the widow deals with the law *personally*. For everyone who is *under* the law this applies absolutely. If *you* will deal with the law, you are on your own and the results will never be good (Romans 3:19, Gal. 5:1-4). For the *redeemed*, the *kinsman redeemer* deals with the law and the results are always good (Romans 8:1-4—substitution). When the redeemer deals with the law, the law *voluntarily* takes off the shoe and *receives no spittle* in the face. The law is *not* humiliated but is rather *honored* and *fulfilled* by the kinsman redeemer and the redeemer himself takes the shame for himself in His substitution.

Secondly, the significance of the shoe is very interesting. The reason for the shoe being removed, as opposed to something else is not clearly defined. Why the shoe? We know that its significance is somehow related to the seed—to the preservation of the seed. To take off the shoe or to have it removed has to do with the refusal or inability to carry on the

seed. The carrying on of the seed in the New Testament refers to the preaching of the Gospel. It is by and through the preaching of the Gospel that the seed of Christ is born into his kingdom. The preaching of the Gospel is the declaration of Christ as the kinsman redeemer who satisfied the law and, by His blood and death, bought back the elect to God. The result of that preaching is that the elect are born from above into the kingdom and family of Christ. It is interesting to note that Paul in defending the matter of supporting the preacher of the Gospel uses Deuteronomy 25:4 to do so (1 Cor. 9:9-14). So, before the words concerning the *preservation* of the seed are declared, what it *involves* is declared. This is about the preaching of the Gospel in carrying on the name of Christ by the birth of His seed. This is why we preach the Gospel and only the Gospel (1 Peter 1:23-25; James 1:18). To refuse to do so would be taking off the shoe, revealing an unwillingness to preach the truth or an inability to do so (Eph. 6:14-15). The believer is neither unwilling nor unable to preach the Gospel. The believer is set for the defense of the Gospel and it is all that he is interested in preaching (1 Cor 9:16). The believer will never take off the shoe.

Finally, there is a word here concerning the priority of this matter. In verses 11-12 the interpretation is plain. Even our closest relations are never to be defended at the expense of preserving the



seed. May the Lord give us this blessed priority in our entire life; to defend the seed, the Christ of God and the Gospel by which the elect are born into the family of God.

## THE GREAT TRANSACTION

1, Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, Ho, such a one! turn aside, 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 ye down here. And they sat down. 3, And he said unto the kinsman, Naomi, that is come again out of the country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land, which was our brother Elimelech's: 4, And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it. 5, Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance. 6, And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it. 7, Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked

off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.      8, Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.      9, And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.      10, Moreover Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of Mahlon, have I purchased to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance, that the name of the dead be not cut off from among his brethren, and from the gate of his place: ye are witnesses this day.      11, And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, We are witnesses. The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel: and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:      12, And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.      13, So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.      14, And the women said unto Naomi, Blessed be the LORD, which hath not left thee this day without a kinsman, that his name may be famous in Israel.      15, And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy

life, and a nourisher of thine old age: for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee, which is better to thee than seven sons, hath born him. 16, And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it. 17, And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David. 18, Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron, 19, And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, 20, And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, 21, And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed, 22, And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

#### Ruth 4:1-22

We have come to the place that is the destination of this entire book. Everything that has lead to this place and everything that follows hangs totally on what happens here. This is a picture of the great transaction, the redemption that our Lord accomplished on Calvary 's tree. An old Hymn that praises Christ for His great work says, "Tis done! The great transaction's done! I am the Lord's and He is mine."

From the first verse of the 4th chapter we see that Boaz is the initiator of the action. He goes up to the gate and we know that his purpose is to intercede for Ruth. He immediately calls for the

*nearer* kinsman because the issue of *redemption* is at hand. Redemption is the single thought on the mind of Boaz. How beautifully this pictures our Lord's work on behalf of His elect. He set his face as a flint toward Calvary. His singular aim was the redemption of His people for the glory of God. He often spoke of His hour, His defining moment that would determine history. Boaz knew what was at stake and failure was not an option. So it was with Christ, but with Him, failure was not a possibility. The outcome was never in doubt (Is. 42:4; Matt. 1:21). Boaz immediately calls for the nearer kinsman because his claim on her must be adjudicated. Our Lord, before he could redeem us, must settle the laws claim of death on us. Redemption is not possible unless it is a completely just redemption. No debt may turn up at some later date whereby the transaction is made null and void (4:4). The law condemns but cannot redeem. The letter killeth but only the spirit giveth life.

In this transaction Boaz buys it all. He buys back what Elimelech lost in his ill-fated effort to save his life from famine. He bought back the inheritance for Naomi and he bought Ruth the Moabitess for his wife. Christ in his great redemption purchased the *entire* field (*all* that Adam lost) for the treasure within, his church, his beloved. He has been given authority over all flesh to give eternal life to those that God has given him.

When the transaction was done the singular nature of the redemption is revealed. He had bought Ruth for his wife to raise up seed in Mahlon's name, to insure the coming of the Messiah. All that transpired was because Boaz loved Ruth (Eph. 5:25-27). Christ came into this world to redeem His people.

There are several things here that depict and picture our Lord's redemption of his people.

1. This redemption was a proper redemption. For it to be so every "i" must be dotted and every "t" must be crossed. The law, in all its claims, must be fulfilled and satisfied in every jot and tittle. Nothing can ever be brought up that can call into question the success and honor of this transaction. Deliverance without *satisfaction* would be nothing more than an illegal escape. The Lord's people are not on the lam. Christ alone fit the bill and meets every requirement (Ps. 24:3-6; Heb. 10:1-5; Is. 45:21).

2. This redemption was a pleasure to the redeemer. Though the cost was great and the sacrifice made to obtain the object was great, the motivation made it a pleasurable experience. Boaz got his prize. He got Ruth for His wife. Our Lord gave all, gave Himself, gave his back to the smiters and his face to them that pull off the hair, he hid not his face from spitting—He gave up the ghost for the redemption of His people. The cost was great, but

through it all, the Lord was doing all his pleasure (Heb. 12:2; Is. 53:10-12).

3. This redemption was precious (Ps. 49:8). It was of great honor and value and the result of it was that the redeemer is precious in the eyes of the redeemed (2:20; 4:11-14; 2 Cor. 9:15; 1 Peter 1:18-20; 2:7). He, and everything He did, is precious in the sight of His elect (His love, condescension, His sacrifice, His satisfaction, His honoring God's holiness as well as all His other attributes, Him being made our righteousness, wisdom, sanctification and redemption, taking us for His bride)—To you who believe, He is precious.

4. This redemption was not hid in a corner. It was open, transparent and public (4:1-2). Witnesses to this redemption were manifold. Heaven rejoiced, hell trembled, and the earth saw this man, they heard this sacrifice cry with a loud voice “It is finished”, after our Lord was buried he arose and was seen by upwards of 500 witnesses.

5. This redemption was on purpose (Ruth 4:10). Boaz did not do this in hopes that someone would accept it. He did not call this assembly to make redemption possible or to offer redemption to anyone, not even Ruth and Naomi. He meant to redeem, and nothing short of that would do. He is not buying slaves, He is a man in love, securing a bride and insuring a seed (Ps. 22:30; Isaiah 53:10; Titus 2:14).

6. This redemption, being on purpose, was therefore a particular redemption (4:10). "Ruth the Moabitess . . . I have purchased." Let men dally in the anesthetizing ether of their notions of free will and universal redemption. Scripture is void of even a hint of universal redemption. Christ's death was a purchase price and the elect and the elect were fully and completely purchased. The bride was the intended and she was bought with the price. Christ dies for His sheep (Is. 53:8; Acts 20:28; Gal. 3:13; Rev. 5:9-10).

7. This redemption produced the intended result. Boaz purchased his bride and raised up seed. From that union came David the king of Israel, and David's son and David's Lord, the Messiah, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the Lord Jesus Christ (Ps. 2:7; matt. 1:5).

8. His was a perfect redemption (4:13). Everything went precisely according to plan. So our Lord's redemption was perfect (John 19; 28,30; Hebrews 10:14).

9. This redemption is worthy of praise for the redeemer and him alone (4:11). Praise the Savior, Ye who know Him. He is worthy.



## REDEMPTION'S PURPOSE

4, And I thought to advertise thee, saying, Buy it before the inhabitants, and before the elders of my people. If thou wilt redeem it, redeem it: but if thou wilt not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know: for there is none to redeem it beside thee; and I am after thee. And he said, I will redeem it.

5, Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

6, And the kinsman said, I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I mar mine own inheritance: redeem thou my right to thyself; for I cannot redeem it.

7, Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.

8, Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

9, And Boaz said unto the elders, and unto all the people, Ye are witnesses this day, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.

## Ruth 4:4-8

In these few verses we see the culmination of all that has transpired and the glorious end of it all is the redemption that is accomplished. In these five verses the word *redeem* or *buy* is used 9 times. There can be no doubt that this is the subject of the passage. We have seen that Boaz's intention to redeem was an honorable intention. Though willing to redeem, he was not about to do it unless the transaction honored God and was done according to the strict requirements of the law. Unless this took place there was no possibility of Boaz redeeming Ruth. We saw this taking place as Boaz dealt with the nearer kinsman. There was no coercion or trickery. This was not a trade off or some slight-of-hand misdirection. The laws of redemption set forth in Deuteronomy and Leviticus are clearly defined. They declare that redemption must follow a specific set of rules.

Redemption is a legal matter, a legal transaction. Part of that transaction and the object and purpose of redemption was that the seed of the redeemed be continued. The redeemer must marry the widow of the dead and raise up seed in his name. If the redeemer was unable or unwilling to do this, no redemption could occur. The law required three basic things in order for redemption to occur.

First, redemption required the restoration of the inheritance of the impoverished relative.

Secondly, redemption required that the brother who had been enslaved through poverty be completely freed or set a liberty.

Thirdly, redemption required that the redeemer marry his dead relative's widow and raise up a lineage in his name.

Boaz accomplished these things for Ruth and that is a picture of what Christ did in the redemption of the elect. Our Lord redeemed the inheritance we lost in Adam. He set us free from our bondage (Gal. 5:1). He has raised up seed in the name of the dead by marriage.

Because redemption is a matter of law, it must also be a matter of public record. Every facet involved in redemption must be publicly done before witnesses so that, once accomplished, it can never be questioned or nullified. This 4th chapter of Ruth makes these things very clear.

First, this matter of redemption was very important and is seen to be so by the actions of Boaz and the response of the people. Boaz called for the nearer kinsman and the elders and immediately a crowd began to assemble. These were no mere gawkers. One of their own was about to be redeemed and that stirred the hearts and minds of the citizenry of Bethlehem. This transaction is of great importance because the glory of God is at stake. Matters of strict law are at the forefront of this dealing. The intensity of the gathering is palpable.

The thrust of religion in *this* day is to speak of redemption in terms of *assisted self-help*. This day's redemption, according to religion, was a great effort that actually accomplished nothing but rather only made redemption possible. Redemption thus loses all its gravity and importance and becomes just another aspect of salvation that is subject to the will of man to make it viable and genuine. Let some poor believer declare the truth of redemption, the absolute legal necessity of its efficacy, the fact that it is intentional, purposeful, particular, limited in scope and the glory of God is tied up with its complete success, and the crowds will gather. Suddenly redemption becomes a matter of life and death that the one redeemed has no part in. Redemption, Biblical redemption, successful redemption is of great importance. If Christ did not redeem those He intended to redeem, then God is not glorified, the law is not honored, and redemption did not take place. Sadly *this* is the doctrine of false religion. Christ intended to redeem everyone but no one in particular, yet all are not redeemed, and therefore, He is a failure. God's law is not honored, redemption is not accomplished and therefore He is not glorified. Thank God that His word utterly dispels that lie (Romans 3:24-31; 8:28; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Secondly, this transaction was *conspicuously* public. Boaz went up to the gate of the city and sat there for all to see. Our Lord accomplished His

redemption openly and in the view of all (Acts 2:22-23; 26:26-27). God darkened the sun, quaked the earth, opened graves, rent rocks in twain and rent the veil from top to bottom when this great redemption was accomplished. These things occurring simultaneously made this transaction *conspicuously* public.

Thirdly, redemption is a legal matter. Understanding this is paramount in grasping what redemption is. This transaction is done according to the law. I'm always amazed that religion is so caught up with the ten commandments but do not even consider the necessity of the fulfillment of the law in the matter of redemption. This scene in our text tells us of the legality of what took place. Could these ten eider's gathered by Boaz be a veiled reference to the Ten Commandments, the first verbal representation of God's holy law. When our Lord made His redemptive transaction, it was necessary that the law be fulfilled. No question could ever arise as to the legality of that transaction. The law must declare that every jot and tittle has been accomplished. The law must say that it has no charge to lay against the redeemed, no ground upon which any accusation can be laid. After the transaction is made the law must walk away completely satisfied, legally *kept* and *honored* or there could be no redemption. 'Tis done! (Romans 10:4).

Also in this text we see that the law is *impotent* in the matter of *redemption*. The failure of the closer relative [nearer kinsman] to redeem reveals the inability of the law to save. By taking off his shoe the closer relative admitted that he not only was unwilling but unable to redeem because such a transaction (especially marriage and raising up seed) would mar his inheritance. Though the full meaning of this is not given, it is obvious that his inability was due to the fact that he would be diminished or dishonored in the transaction. The law of God is holy, just and good. For it to embrace a sinner for the purpose of salvation, especially to raise up a seed by that union would mar its justice. The law can only *identify*, *define* and *expose* sin. It must see to it that the sentence and judgment be executed according to the strictest requirements of its supreme holiness. It *cannot* save for it is not equipped with mercy or grace. It requires a price but does not have the price. It cannot do otherwise (Romans 3:19-20; 7:9; 8:3). Any who would presume to come to the law for justification, redemption, sanctification or rule of life will find the law to pluck off the shoe and in doing so declare that it is unwilling and unable to save but is clearly and rightfully ready to condemn any and all of your supposed merit as utterly sinfully and the verdict will be condemnation. The law enslaves but redemption frees. But what the law

could not redeem, Boaz and our heavenly Boaz gladly redeemed (Romans 8:1-4).

Redemption ultimately has to do with relationship and intimate connection. The law is written on a stone and unless you affection is inordinate and you are certifiable, you cannot have a relationship with a stone (pet rocks excluded). The law is holy and men are sinful—there can be no relationship. But the *redeemer* by nature must have a relationship to the *redeemed*. There must be marriage and the purpose of the redemption is to raise up seed to the dead. As Boaz accomplished this for Ruth, so our Lord redeemed us to raise up seed from among the fallen sons and daughters of our father Adam. As surety, our Lord assumed the debt of His elect before the world began. Christ has been given authority over all flesh to give eternal life to as many as God has given Him. Christ has bought them all legally, redeemed them and presents them faultless before God's throne. Christ's intercessory work assured the salvation of the elect. Because the law and justice of God was satisfied, the righteousness of God demands that everyone for whom Christ paid the price of redemption must be saved. God immutability demands it. No one for whom Christ shed His redeeming blood shall ever suffer the judgment of justice. As Toplady said “Payment God cannot twice demand, first at my bleeding surety's hand and them again at mine.” The

proof that religion does not understand the holy legality of redemption and refuses the fact of its success is that they have some for whom Christ died suffering the judgment of God at the great white throne. No, a thousand time no—everyone for whom Christ died is fully, finally and forever redeemed. He shall see of the travail of His soul and shall be satisfied.



