



NEW LIFE WOMEN

A Study in the Book of Ruth

*redemption
providence
inheritance
hope*



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Introduction

Welcome to this study in the Book of Ruth! I'm so glad you are here!

As we embark on this study together, it is my sincere prayer that you grow in your knowledge of and love for the Lord and His Word.

This study was borne out of a genuine desire to see women fully embrace who they are in Christ - to know they are chosen, loved, cherished and redeemed.

The truth is, the daily battery of life can sometimes make those realities feel distant or unattainable. We can feel defeated, discouraged, disheartened and miserable.

But this is not how God wants us to live. He wants us to know that when we know Him as Lord and Saviour, we have everything we need. He is enough.

So, as we study Ruth, I pray you will know the God who is enough for you even better!



Study Method

The 4 Cs

There's every chance you have come across many different approaches to studying a text - whether you are a seasoned Christian with a bookshelf bowing under the weight of a hundred studies, or whether you haven't really spent much time with a text since you did your High School English!

Since we only have 4 weeks, we have a lot of ground to cover, so we are going to follow 4 overarching principles when it comes to studying this text.

1. Context

This is where we take time to place the book in its environment, its setting and place in time and history. We will take some time to understand when it was written, who wrote it, what genre and style it was written in and what this knowledge brings to our understanding of the book as a whole.

2. Continuity

It's also important to understand what place this book and its contents has in the big picture of the Bible. How does it fit in the story of who God is? What role does it play? How does it point to Jesus?

3. Consideration

Now for the real meat! This is where we study the text more closely. Since we are only meeting once a month, there will be - dare I say it - some home work! You will find you get so much more from the text if you can put some time aside in between our meetings to read and mull over the text. I promise it will be worth it!

4. Conversation

Then, lastly we will meet to talk! Our times together will be where we get to talk over what we have read, think about how we can apply the principles we have learned, cheer each other on and pray for one another.

For the purposes of this study, we will be using the ESV Bible, but it can be helpful to cross-reference with other versions, so we shall do so from time to time!

Use the space below to make notes on the context of Ruth and its place in the Bible.

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Chapter One

Naomi Widowed

1 In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech and the name of his wife Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. 3 But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. 4 These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, 5 and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

Ruth's Loyalty to Naomi

6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the Lord had visited his people and given them food. 7 So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. 8 But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. 9 The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. 10 And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." 11 But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? 12 Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, 13 would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me." 14 Then they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.

15 And she said, "See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law." 16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." 18 And when Naomi saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more.

Naomi and Ruth Return

19 So the two of them went on until they came to Bethlehem. And when they came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" 20 She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi: call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me. 21 I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi, when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?"

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

Consideration & Conversation

1. The genealogies written for us in the Bible can sometimes not appear to be the most inspiring read! What do you think they are there for, and what purpose do they serve?

2. With this in mind, what might the significance of the information we are given in verses 1 - 5 be?

3. What are the various troubles faced by Naomi that are given to us in this chapter?

Vs 1

Vs 3

Vs 5

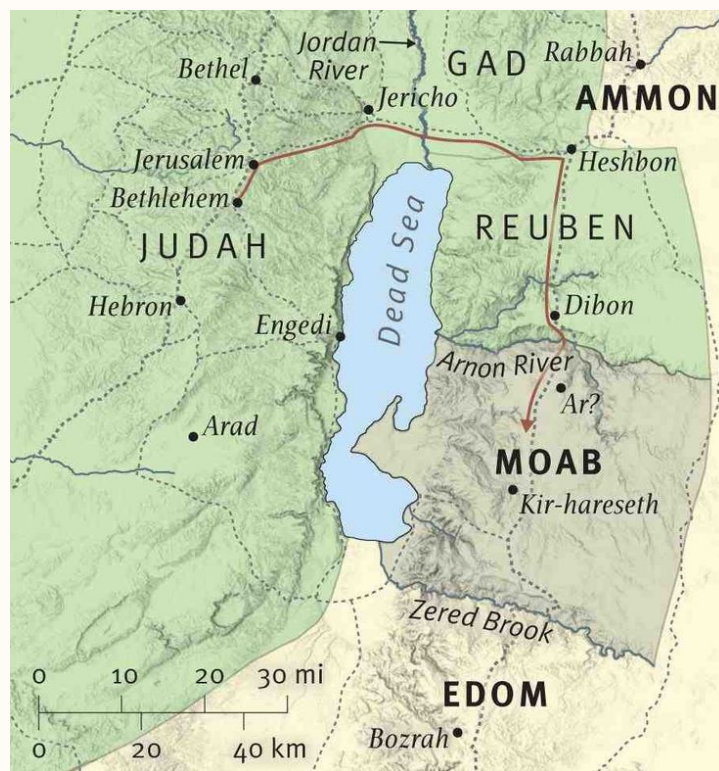
Vs 6-14

Vs 19

REDEMPTION ~ PROVIDENCE ~ INHERITANCE ~ HOPE

4. In verse 1 we see that Elimelech takes his family from Bethlehem to sojourn in Moab. Read Judges 21:25. What does this tell you about what it would have been like to live in Israel at this time?

The map below shows the route they would have taken from Bethlehem to Moab. It would have been about 50 miles across steep and rugged terrain, likely taking 7-10 days. This is worth bearing in mind when we consider the journey and the outcome of it.



5. God had led his people to the Promised Land; with this in mind, and considering the words in Judges, was Elimelech's decision a good idea? Explain your answer.

6. APPLY: In what ways can we be tempted to be like Elimelech when we face difficulties and trials? What is the better way to face them?

A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

7. In verse 6, we read that Naomi decided to return to Bethlehem. Despite her troubles, what might this tell us about her faith?

8. Verse 4 tells us that they had been there for about ten years. What other light does this shed on their decision to leave Moab?

9. In verse 13, Naomi says that "the hand of the Lord has gone against me". Do you agree with this? Explain your answer.

10. Look again at verses 15 and 16. What do you note as being one of the main differences between Orpah and Ruth?

11. APPLY: Looking over verses 16-22 again, what can we learn from Ruth's character? Bear in mind that leaving with Naomi might have led to a life of poverty and without marriage.

12. REFLECTION: The subheadings of this study are 'redemption, providence, inheritance and hope'. Can you see any of these at work yet? If so, in what ways and to what extent?



REDEMPTION ~ PROVIDENCE ~ INHERITANCE ~ HOPE

Week 2 - Chapter 2

Context & Continuity

Use the space below to reflect on last week's study. What were the key takeaways for you?
How can you apply what you have learned to your own life and situation/s?

Use the space below to remind yourself of the key contextual factors of the Book of Ruth;
what do you think are the most important things you need to bear in mind when you read it?

Chapter Two

Ruth Meets Boaz

Now Naomi had a relative of her husband's, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. 2 And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, "Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favour." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." 3 So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech. 4 And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem. And he said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered, "The Lord bless you." 5 Then Boaz said to his young man who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" 6 And the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered, "She is the young Moabite woman, who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 She said, 'Please let me glean and gather among the sheaves after the reapers.' So she came, and she has continued from early morning until now, except for a short rest."

8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in another field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. 9 Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn." 10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favour in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" 11 But Boaz answered her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me, and how you left your father and mother and your native land and came to a people that you did not know before. 12 The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge!" 13 Then she said, "I have found favour in your eyes, my lord, for you have comforted me and spoken kindly to your servant, though I am not one of your servants."

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

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15 When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her."

17 So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley. 18 And she took it up and went into the city. Her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also brought out and gave her what food she had left over after being satisfied. 19 And her mother-in-law said to her, "Where did you glean today? And where have you worked? Blessed be the man who took notice of you." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The man's name with whom I worked today is Boaz." 20 And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!" Naomi also said to her, "The man is a close relative of ours, one of our redeemers." 21 And Ruth the Moabite said, "Besides, he said to me, 'You shall keep close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'" 22 And Naomi said to Ruth, her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, lest in another field you be assaulted." 23 So she kept close to the young women of Boaz, gleaning until the end of the barley and wheat harvests. And she lived with her mother-in-law.

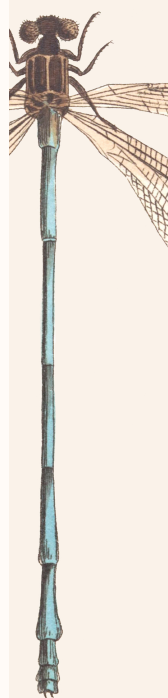
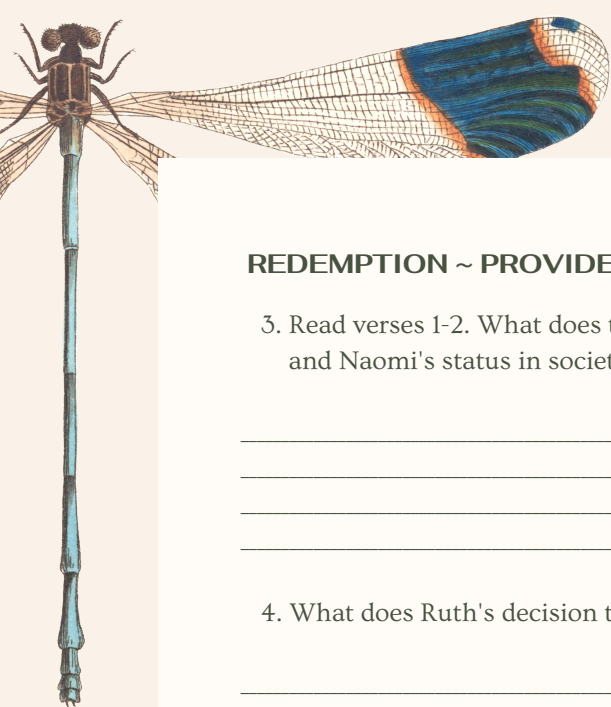
Consideration

1. Find out what you can about the Old Testament practice of 'gleaning'. Note down some details you think are important or relevant.

2. Read the following explanation from The Bible Panorama.

"We need to bear in mind that if a man dies leaving a widow, the nearest male relative can have the right of redemption of the land, by which he will buy the man's land and marry his widow, in order to ensure that the land passes to resultant children of that marriage. He is known as a 'kinsman-redeemer' and sometimes referred to as a 'near-relative' or 'close relative'."

Who is this describing at the start of Chapter 2?



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3. Read verses 1-2. What does this - along with what you noted for Q1 - tell you about Ruth and Naomi's status in society?

4. What does Ruth's decision to go gleaning reveal about her character?

5. In verse 4 we meet Boaz, whose name means 'in him is strength'. He would have been a man of wealth - what do verses 4-6 reveal about his character? What kind of master does he appear to have been?

6. The reapers describe Ruth's activity to Boaz. Read verse 7 and note what aspect of her character is apparent here.

7. How can we see God's providence at work in these verses? Verse 3 says Ruth 'happened to come to' Boaz's field. Do you think this was just an example of chance? Explain your answer.

8. In 1: 22, 2: 2 and 2:10, Ruth is referred to as a Moabite or a foreigner. Why do you think this is an important detail to have been included?



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9. Look over verses 8-16. Note down all the ways Boaz demonstrates his kindness.

10. Read over verses 17-23. How do we see the character of Ruth developing? Can you see any of her characteristics reinforced? Can you see anything new about her emerging?

11. APPLY: What aspects of Ruth's character do you admire the most and why?

12. REFLECTION: The subheadings of this study are 'redemption, providence, inheritance, hope'. How can you see these themes/ideas at work here?

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Chapter Three

Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor

Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Is not Boaz our relative, with whose young women you were? See, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Wash therefore and anoint yourself, and put on your cloak and go down to the threshing floor, but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 But when he lies down, observe the place where he lies. Then go and uncover his feet and lie down, and he will tell you what to do.” 5 And she replied, “All that you say I will do.”

6 So she went down to the threshing floor and did just as her mother-in-law had commanded her. 7 And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. Then she came softly and uncovered his feet and lay down. 8 At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! 9 He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your wings[a] over your servant, for you are a redeemer.” 10 And he said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. 11 And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. 12 And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. 13 Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.”

14 So she lay at his feet until the morning, but arose before one could recognize another. And he said, “Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” 15 And he said, “Bring the garment you are wearing and hold it out.” So she held it, and he measured out six measures of barley and put it on her. Then she went into the city. 16 And when she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her, 17 saying, “These six measures of barley he gave to me, for he said to me, ‘You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’” 18 She replied, “Wait, my daughter, until you learn how the matter turns out, for the man will not rest but will settle the matter today.”



A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Consideration

1. Read verses 1-5. What qualities do we see in Naomi here? Do you detect any change since we last encountered her?

2. These verses also illustrate a particular Near Eastern custom. Boaz was a generation older than Ruth and would not have instigated marriage with a younger woman. With this in mind, what do you think of Naomi's plan? Look again at the details we are given.

3. What do you learn about Ruth's character in verse 6? What do her actions tell you about how she viewed Naomi?

4. What does Boaz commend Ruth for in verse 10?

5. Look at how verse is described in verse 11. Look the verse up in the following translations and note down the different words below:

ESV _____

NIV _____

NASB _____

How does this add to your impression of Ruth's character? How does each version illuminate your ideas further?



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6. Look at verses 16-19. What do we learn about the character of Boaz here? Look at the following phrases and summarise what each is telling you:

"if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you"

"Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."

"he said to me, 'You must not go back empty-handed to your mother-in-law.'"

"the man will not rest but will settle the matter today"

7. We are going to spend a little time focusing on the role of Naomi in this chapter. Read Titus 2: 3-5. Summarise in the space below what it tells you.

8. Naomi takes on a mentoring role with Ruth. Why do you think this is important?

9. APPLY: When considering the role of Naomi, and the verses in Titus 2, what is there to admire and model as far as we can in our own lives?




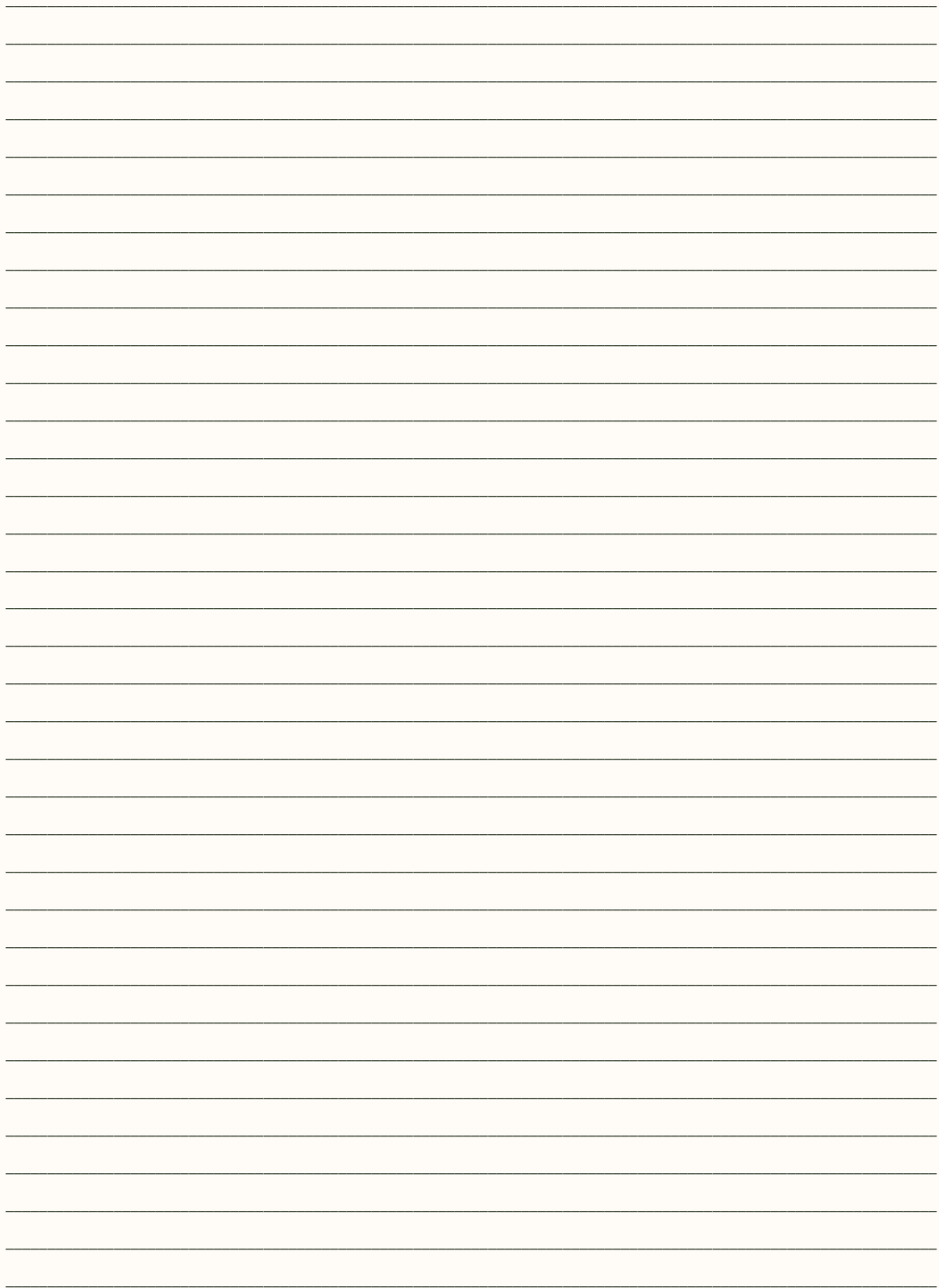
10. REFLECTION: The subheadings of this study are 'redemption, providence, inheritance, hope'. How can you see these themes/ideas at work here?



A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Conversation

Use this space to note down any further thoughts and ideas you have when we meet together.





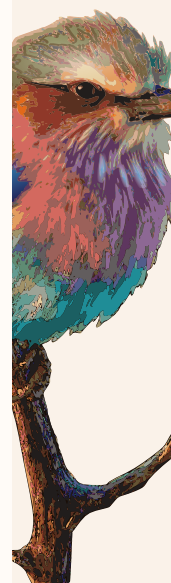
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Week 4 - Chapter 4

Context & Continuity

Use the space below to reflect on last week's study. What were the key takeaways for you?
How can you apply what you have learned to your own life and situation/s?

How can you see glimpses of Christ emerging? How and where are these shown?





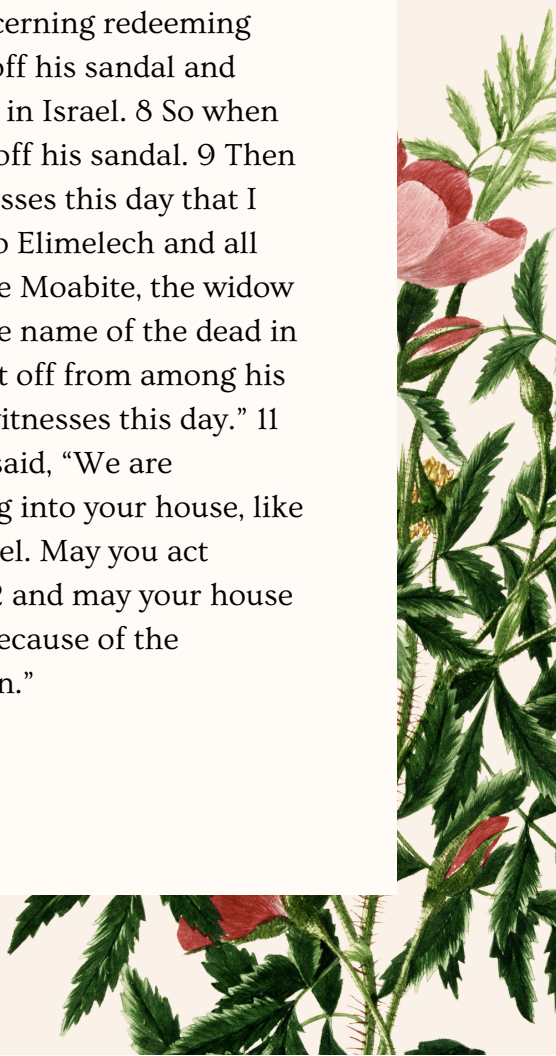
A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

Chapter four

Boaz Redeems Ruth

Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, “Turn aside, friend; sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down. 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. 4 So I thought I would tell you of it and say, ‘Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.’ If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you.” And he said, “I will redeem it.” 5 Then Boaz said, “The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance.” 6 Then the redeemer said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it.”

7 Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging: to confirm a transaction, the one drew off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was the manner of attesting in Israel. 8 So when the redeemer said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal. 9 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. 10 Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day.” 11 Then all the people who were at the gate and the elders said, “We are witnesses. May the Lord make the woman, who is coming into your house, like Rachel and Leah, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned in Bethlehem, 12 and may your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring that the Lord will give you by this young woman.”



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Ruth and Boaz Marry

13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. 14 Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and may his name be renowned in Israel! 15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has given birth to him." 16 Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. 17 And the women of the neighbourhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

The Genealogy of David

18 Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron, 19 Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab, 20 Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon, 21 Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed, 22 Obed fathered Jesse, and Jesse fathered David.

Consideration

1. Read verses 1-2. Boaz goes to this city gate - this is where important transactions would have taken place. Why do you think it is significant that Boaz went there of all places?

2. Why does the relative Boaz has sought out decline the offer of the land, after initially agreeing to take it?

3. How would you describe Boaz's actions in verses 7-10? What about his speech?



A STUDY IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

4. In verse 11, Rachel (beloved wife of Jacob) and Leah (mother of Judah through Jacob) are mentioned. Take some time to remind yourself or look into who these women were. Why are they mentioned here?

5. Read verse 14. Why is this fact important to note? How does it contrast with the state we found Naomi in at the start of the book?

6. How have things changed for Ruth since we first met her at the start of the book?

7. What is significant about verses 16-22? Why are they important?

8. In what ways is Boaz a type of Christ? How does he point us to Jesus?

9. APPLY: What are the main lessons you feel you can learn from:

Naomi: _____

Ruth: _____

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Boaz: _____

10. This book has been referred to as 'the most beautiful short story ever written' - to what extent do you agree? Does it deserve this accolade?

10. REFLECTION: The subheadings of this study are 'redemption, providence, inheritance, hope'. How can you see these themes/ideas at work here?

11. REFLECTION: At the end of this study, what are your main pointers for prayer? Take some time to consider what the Lord has been teaching you.

Conversation

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