

## Pentecost And The Book Of Ruth

Pentecost Lessons in Ruth

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Since tomorrow is Pentecost, I thought I would speak about something that has very much to do with that. To begin, I would like give a little background to the books that the Jews call the *Megilloth*.

The Jews divide the Old Testament into three sections. First, there is the law, also called the Torah, or the Pentateuch—the first five books. A second is called the Prophets. In Hebrew it is called *nevi'im* which simply means, "The Prophets." They are all the prophetic books. And they have a third group that they call, "The Writings." In Hebrew, it is *ketuvim*, while in Greek it is the *hagiographa*.

Now, this last section is further divided into the five *Megilloth*, or the "festival scrolls." These five are read in the different festival seasons. The Song of Songs is read at Passover time. The book read tomorrow for the Pentecost season is Ruth. The book of Lamentations is read on the 9<sup>th</sup> day of the month of Ab, or Av. (This is because on the 9<sup>th</sup> of Ab the Temple was destroyed, both in 585 BC, and 70 AD. And so it is fitting that they read the book of Lamentations on that day.) Ecclesiastes is read at the Feast of Tabernacles, and Esther is read during Purim.

But why do the Jews read Ruth at the Pentecost season? They did not just pull it out of a hat, and declare, "Okay, we are going to read Ruth at Pentecost." It has significance, but what is that significance? In fact, I am sure that the Jews do not fully understand the significance of reading the book of Ruth at Pentecost, but it sure has important spiritual meaning to us in the New Testament church of God.

So today, we are going to look at how this little book, which some have called, "The Finest Short Story Ever Written," should encourage all New Covenant Christians. This book may have a lot of Old Covenant things in it, however it is very appropriate to us under the New Covenant, as you will see.

Of course, the main reason the Jews assigned Ruth to Pentecost is because the time setting of the story is set right after the Wavesheaf Offering had been made down to the day of Pentecost.

**Ruth 1:22** So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to

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Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.

It is the barley harvest that begins right after the Wavesheaf Offering is made, the day after the Sabbath during the Days of Unleavened Bread. Remember that they cut the wavesheaf and offered it before God, and then it was only after that that they could actually harvest the fields and eat the new grain.

Now, Ruth and Naomi returned to Israel just as the barley harvest began.

**Ruth 2:23** So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of the barley harvest, and the wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

The wheat harvest usually ended just before or with the Feast of Pentecost. So then, it was during this fifty-day period that they harvested both the barley and then the wheat. I suppose this was a smaller harvest, but there was still a lot of work to it. They went through the fields pulling the weeds, then cutting the grain, threshing the grain from the heads, and then winnowing and cleaning the grain, as we see Boaz doing later. So it was quite a bit of work.

It was early in this time period that Naomi and Ruth returned from Moab, and they are soon found by Boaz, who eventually redeems and marries Ruth. With just this little bit of detail about Ruth coming back from Moab—from out of the world, out of a Gentile nation—coming into the Land of Promise, meeting a man who is a type of Christ, and marrying Him as a type of the Bride, we see things that are parallel to Christians and the Day of Pentecost.

If we just read through the book, it seems to illustrate only the Old Covenant in so many ways, more so than it illustrates the New Covenant. We run across the ideas of levirate marriage, where if a man dies without any offspring, his closest male kin would marry his widow to bear a son to inherit the property of the deceased man.

There is also the idea of redeeming property, which we just partially mentioned, that if somebody went into debt, and they were disposed to sell their lands, their nearest relative could buy that property, and give it back to the person who had owned it at the Jubilee.

There are blessings and cursings early in the book of Ruth, where they seemed to be

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blessed for some things, and cursed for other things, similar to Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28. (The time period of Ruth is during the Judges, after all.)

And there are the elders, sitting in the gates of the city, judging matters that come up before them.

There is the idea that Moabites cannot enter Israel until the tenth generation. There is a pall hanging over Ruth because she is of Moab and not an Israelite. And there are other things as well.

But what we are going to see, as we go through a few examples in this book, is that the book prefigures many of the concepts that we in the church of God consider to be New Covenant, not Old Covenant. This will begin to illustrate the similarities of the Old Covenant and the New Covenant, and that God had the New Covenant in mind from the very beginning. The people of the Old Testament could come under the New Covenant even before it had been announced. God already had this in mind from the very beginning. He is showing them through the Old Covenant that these things are going to be taking place in the future.

And remember, David knew that a Savior would forgive his sins a thousand years before his Savior came. David came under the New Covenant but in the future. He is looking at it from his standpoint of a thousand years *before* Christ, whereas we look at it from two thousand years *after* Christ. But there was a way, even under the Old Covenant, for men to come into God's Family. Of course, there were those special things that God had to give them, the Holy Spirit especially, because He was working with them to bring about His plan and purpose.

For the last year or so, we have heard a lot about [the covenants, grace, and law](#). How long was that sermon series on the covenants? So we have heard a lot about the covenants, and we will hear a little more about them today.

We saw how a covenant is a mutual agreement between two parties. The mutual aspect of this is very important: Each of the parties coming into the agreement have certain responsibilities to fulfill. It is not a one-sided thing.

Secondly, we saw that God unilaterally does a lot on our behalf. How much do we actually have to do? How much has God done just on His own for us out of His love and grace?

Thirdly, we remember that the faults in the Old Covenant were actually *in the people*, not

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the covenant itself—one of the parties was not converted. They could not keep the terms of the Old Covenant. And the reason they could not keep the terms is that they did not have the Holy Spirit. They did not have the mind—the heart of flesh—to learn to keep the terms.

And fourthly, we saw that the New Covenant opens up a relationship with God to the Gentiles—to those who were apart from the covenant. And He has done this by allowing them to become spiritual Israelites. They have been grafted into the natural olive tree, as Paul says (I Corinthians 11).

In type, all these ideas that we have considered to be New Covenant, are found in this little bitty book of Ruth.

I have four points that we will go over one by one. Again, we will see in the book of Ruth that though it seems to be Old Covenant, it really shows the New Covenant.

## **I. OUR MUTUAL RESPONSIBILITY UNDER THE COVENANT**

Although the word "kindness" is mentioned in the book of Ruth only three times, it is a key theme to this book. Kindness is translated from the Hebrew *chesed*. It can mean "kindness," but that is one of its most basic synonyms. Its simplest meaning is, "the full flow of natural affection." If you have affection for someone, you show him kindness. As Herbert W. Armstrong wrote, the best of human love is mother's love—how a mother loves her child. She will go above and beyond to show kindness to her children. This kindness of a mother not only includes doing things for them—diapering them, feeding them, etc—but also protecting them, and disciplining them—all the things that a kind mother would do for her children to produce the greatest result.

But, when *chesed* describes the relationship between God and man, it takes on an even greater meaning—a superlative meaning. It means "the goodness and the abundant grace of God." He just gives and gives and gives. And He helps, He provides, and He does everything He can to show us kindness and mercy and blessing, so that we will be conformed into the thing that He wants—a son in His image.

When it is from a man toward God, *chesed* means "a kindness and gratitude to the utmost; to the highest degree that man can show." It has a meaning of "piety" in its fullest sense, as much as a person can be pious—it means "holiness as much as a man can be holy." It means "zealous affection for all that is good and truly desirable." Remember, this is from man toward God, in the reaction of man toward God, and what man is supposed to be showing to God—gratitude and kindness to their highest

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degrees; piety; holiness; and zealous affection for all that is good and truly desirable.

When scholars take all these ideas about man's relationship with God, God's relationship with man, and how a mother treats her children, they come up with a two-word definition to cover all of this—"covenant loyalty"—loyalty to the covenant. It means "to keep the faith," "to keep faith." Or, we might make it as simple as "to be good." It also means "to do one's part to fulfill one's obligations." Whether it is your part or God's part, it is loyalty to the covenant.

Right inside the Ten Commandments this idea is explained. But, if you were to read them through, you would not find the word "kindness."

**Exodus 20:4-6** "You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Guess where the Hebrew term *chesed* is? It is in verse 6, signaled by the translated word "mercy." Part of God's obligation under the covenant is to show us mercy. And we also see that the flip-side of that is also in that same verse—that is, man's obligation is also shown in verse 6. God shows mercy to thousands. But, which thousands? To the thousands who love God, and keep His commandments. He says, "I will be merciful if you keep My commandments and you love Me." He is actually stating the covenant relationship.

The blessing and cursing chapters found in Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28—how do they go? "If you obey Me, I will bless you. If you do not obey Me, I will curse you."

This, then, is *chesed*, or covenant loyalty. When you are doing the covenant right, there are blessings, and all the good things that come with it. But the covenant also says that when you do not do right, and break the covenant, and are disobedient, then there are things that come upon you as a result, and they are bad. This covenant loyalty is both positive and negative, but even the negative is good because He may put us through the negative to get us back to the positive. Is that not how He dealt through the time of the judges of Israel? They broke the covenant. He would send a plague—whether war or famine or other such destructive thing. Why did God do that? To bring them back

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under the covenant. He would send a judge, and they would be prosperous for a while. Then they would break the covenant again, and He would curse them again, but the curse was designed to bring them back under the covenant and a right relationship with Him so He could bless them again. But it was just a cycle that went on and on and on.

This is *chesed*—kindness under the covenant—covenant obligation—covenant loyalty.

We can see a bit more in Deuteronomy.

**Deuteronomy 7:9** "Therefore know that the LOORD your God, He is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and mercy for a thousand generations with those who love Him and keep His commandments;...

This is almost an exact parallel with Exodus 20:6. The kindness is still expressed here as "mercy," but God through Moses expresses it as "keeps covenant and mercy." This is a parallelism. He is saying it twice. Keeping covenant and showing mercy are the same thing. If He keeps covenant with you, and He shows you mercy, He is describing *chesed* in a couple of different ways so you understand what He is getting at. He is God, and He will always do His part, and you do your part, to love Him and keep His Commandments.

Now, we are going to see this in the book of Ruth. In chapters 1 and 2 we have a situation where she asks for it and later receives it.

**Ruth 1:8** And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each to your mother's house. The LOORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me."

What she is doing here is praying—perhaps more like making a wish—that God will show His covenant loyalty because these two Moabite women have done what they knew to be right to both their dead husbands, their dead father-in-law, and to Naomi. They had done what was right. She was asking for God to bless them.

In the next passage, we find Naomi's answered prayer when Ruth goes out to the field, which is discovered to be Boaz' field, and is shown favor by him.

**Ruth 2:20** Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "Blessed be he of the LOORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!"

She sees that her prayer has been answered—*chesed* has been done. God has shown His kindness. He had done His part because they had done their part.

And it also happened (this is what I was getting to—this is another thing of the same sort) that Boaz recognizes Ruth having fulfilled her part well.

**Ruth 3:10** Then he [Boaz] said, "Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness [having gone above and beyond in *chesed*] at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich."

Boaz is saying that Ruth had fulfilled the covenant. She had asked him to be her redeemer, which is part of the covenant (part of the law since they were under the Old Covenant), and she had done it. She did not go after the young men or the handsome men, but instead asked Boaz, who was as far as she knew her closest kinsman (though there was a closer one). She had done what the law stated, "Go to the kinsman and ask him to redeem you." She had done that, gone for this older man, Boaz, and shown abundant kindness all along the way.

Evidently, she was a beautiful woman, if not in features, in character too. He thought it a great honor that she had come to him and asked him to redeem her. She had gone above and beyond in *chesed*. "You have done more now than when you came in and were so kind to Naomi."

Here we see the mutual responsibility within the covenant relationship. Even though we are talking about Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi, we are actually talking about types too. Boaz is a type of Christ. And here, he had just blessed her. He had just praised her for how she had shown kindness to him by going above and beyond in choosing him for her husband. Now, it is part of the covenant, but she went at it with great zeal. And he blessed her for it and heaped praise upon her.

Ruth is a type of the church or of the individual Christian. (It goes back and forth.) So we should not let that stray too far from our minds when we are thinking about this because it has great impact on us as New Covenant Christians.

So, here "Christ" praises the "church" or the "individual Christian" for doing his/her part and going above and beyond in making redemption and marriage with Him possible, because we both have a part to play. Christ would just love to see us play that part to

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the hilt—above and beyond—we have shown more *chesed* at the end than at the beginning!

That is interesting too. Most people show a first love, and then it wanes. Here Christ would like to see us grow toward that enthusiasm and zeal—that first love. Evidently, Ruth did that. And it really impressed Boaz. She knocked his socks off!

So, there are certain things we have to do, and certain things that God does for us.

## II. GOD'S UNILATERAL WORK ON OUR BEHALF

The next thing is God's watchful care, providence, and sovereignty over His people. Sovereignty is shown here in Ruth:

**Ruth 1:1** 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 Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

Now, why was there a famine in the land? If you will remember, in the times of the judges, you can be pretty sure that there was an apostasy of some sort. And so God allowed a famine in the land to bring them back to Him.

Who ultimately is responsible for the famine? God is. He is sovereign. He allowed it, or He designed it to happen. He may have caused it to happen just so this story could be written and told. But surely there is much more than that because from this union came Israel's great king, David, and an even greater King, Jesus Christ.

God caused a famine in the land that caused Elimelech and his family to journey to Moab. And what happened? Read the story and you will see.

**Ruth 1:6** 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 that the LOORD [YHVH, the Covenant God] had visited His people by giving them bread.

So, not only did God cause the famine, He later caused the prosperity in the land. He is making Naomi and her family move back, but making them come back minus all the men so that Ruth and Naomi return as widows, with Boaz, a type of Christ waiting to

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redeem Ruth. God worked all this out—our sovereign God—the Almighty!

Let me show you here how God is in even the smallest of details.

**Ruth 2:1** There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech....

Do you know what the name Elimelech means? It means, "God-is-King!"

So now, let us read it that way:

**Ruth 2:1** There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of God-is-King. And his name is Boaz.

Do you know what Boaz means? It means, "In Him is strength!" That is a pretty good type of Christ, is it not?

**Ruth 2:2** So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor."

She does not know where she is going to go to glean grain. She is just going to go out to the fields and try to find someone's favor so she can glean some grain for their food.

**Ruth 2:2-3** And she said to her, "Go, my daughter." Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers.

Now, listen to this next sentence:

**Ruth 2:3** And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to [In-Him-is-Strength] Boaz, who [by the way] was of the family of [God-is-King] Elimelech.

Is that not interesting? Do you know what that says in the Hebrew? "Her chance chanced upon Boaz' field." Yes, she just "happened" to come upon Boaz' field!

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Most commentators say that whoever wrote this line had a twinkle in his eye when he did it. Yeah, sure! She just happened upon Boaz' field, of the family of God-is-King.

God is indeed in the smallest of details. On the very first day she went out to glean, whose field did she wind up in? Christ's field. Boaz' field.

But it was no chance. God was working with this woman because He wanted to bring these two together—Ruth, a type of the church or Christian, and Boaz, a type of Christ. He wants us to learn something from all this. This is the line of David, and He wanted His Son Jesus Christ in the flesh to come from these two.

How many times did we have heard John 6:44, "No man can come to Me, unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day"? God is working something out in both these people's lives, and in the lives of millions of people who would come after them who would be touched by David, Hezekiah, Josiah, and all the kings of Judah. And of course, you cannot leave out the One whose life has touched us most deeply, Jesus Christ, who came from these two. And we see written, "Her chance chanced upon the field of In-Him-is-Strength who is of the family of God-is-King." There was no chance at all in this. It was meant to be. God was working with these people bringing them together.

Let us continue reading chapter 2, since it is just a gem of God's unilateral work on our behalf. We will notice all the things that Boaz does for Ruth just as like Christ does for us.

**Ruth 2:4** Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem,

That is a good one! Let us put another name in there, Jesus Christ.

**Ruth 2:4** Now behold, Boaz [Jesus Christ] came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The *LOORD* be with you!"

What was His name mentioned in Matthew 1 and Isaiah 7? Was it not Immanuel, which means, "God with us"? What were the first words out of Boaz' mouth in this book? "God is with you!" However, "be" is in italics in most Bibles, and it is not there in the original. This is very similar to Immanuel, though it is not the same word. But the idea is the same. The covenant God, the God who enjoined you, showed His covenant loyalty to you, is with you.

And how did the people respond?

**Ruth 2:4** And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"

"Thank God for you! May God bless you for what you are doing."

This shows Boaz's character too. The first thing Boaz says to his workers when coming into the field is, "God be with you all." He meant it. He wanted God to be with them.

**Ruth 2:5** Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"

"Hey! I have seen this nice looking girl out there gleaning. I would like to know who that is."

**Ruth 2:6** So the servant who was in charge of the reapers...

This is interesting too, "the servant who was in charge of the reapers." Anyone who does not think the ministry is necessary need only to read a couple of verses in Ruth. Boaz has people in charge of his reapers. This is a little aside here. The ministry is very necessary for the spiritual health of the congregation. We will see this as we continue along.

**Ruth 2:6** So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab."

There is another thing that keeps popping up. They keep calling her a Moabite, coming from the country of Moab. She is not an Israelite. She is not from around here. This is just another thing to think about as we go through this.

**Ruth 2:7** "And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.'"

She asked for the lowest position. This reminds me of another set of verses, where we

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are admonished to take the lowest seat, etc. This shows her character. She asks, "Please may I glean behind the reapers?" According to the law, they were supposed to leave the corners of their field un-reaped so that the poor and the stranger could glean there. But there is nothing that says that the people had to allow them to glean among the sheaves or take the best. So, she asked for the lowest seat, if you will.

**Ruth 2:7** "So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

"She's been working diligently since the morning, with only a little bit of rest there in the shade of that lean-to we have. She's been working diligently all day with just a little bit of rest."

**Ruth 2:8** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, . . ."

This is interesting. "Listen!" has been a theme among us lately. Now, the type of Christ says here, "You will listen my daughter." This is a command. It is a nice command, but it is still a command. Remember, that is one of the themes of Jesus' ministry—listen! "I have got something important to tell you." What does he say?

**Ruth 2:8-9** Then Boaz said to Ruth, "You will listen, my daughter, will you not? [This is important!] Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women [my servants]. Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

Now, listen to her reaction:

**Ruth 2:10** So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

"I am a stranger in this land! I do not belong. You do not have to do this for me. You have given me all these extras, all these bonuses, all these additional blessings! What has happened that you should look upon me with such grace?"

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**Ruth 2:11** And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, . . ."

Look at that *chesed* again. Remember what Naomi said? "You have done all these good things for the living and the dead. May God deal kindly with you."

Boaz says, "It has been reported to me about all the kind things that you have done for your family." And this is his answer as to why he had blessed her, because she had been doing her covenant loyalty, her obligation under her covenant.

**Ruth 2:11** ". . . and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before."

Here, he stresses yet again that she comes from a land not Israel.

**Ruth 2:12** "The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel [*chesed* again], under whose wings you have come for refuge."

Those of you who are studying the place of safety, this is an important phrase. It is interesting.

**Ruth 2:13** Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."

Keep that in the back of your mind. We will get back to it, maybe.

**Ruth 2:14a** Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, . . ."

Boaz is about to pour out more blessing upon her. Get the picture. She is a Moabitess, a foreigner, not of the land. She was also a woman, which did not help her at all. And then he says, "You, who are on the lower seat, come up, come here, and eat with me.

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Eat of the bread." (He gives her lunch.)

**Ruth 2:14** "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar."

What does that remind you of? To me, maybe the Last Supper? Or when David said, "My friend who has lifted up his heel against me." It was an honor that the host would give the sop to someone, as when Christ made the last plea to Judas not to betray him. But what does Boaz do? He does some of the same things but with better results. He shows her honor by giving her the sop. It is interesting the little pieces of Christ coming into the story of Ruth and Boaz.

**Ruth 2:14** So she sat beside the reapers [not the gleaners now, but up with the reapers], and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.

Here the master is serving her, passing her food, "Here, eat this, we just reaped some of the best. Here, let us throw this on the fire and get it parched just a bit and enjoy it." And just as God does, He gives her a little bit more than she needs to be satisfied, so she is able to keep a bit of it for later.

**Ruth 2:15** And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her."

Now skip down just a bit.

**Ruth 2:17** So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

She got quite a bit. Now, she is back with Naomi and telling her what happened.

**Ruth 2:21** Ruth the Moabitess said, "He also said to me, 'You shall stay close by my young men until they have finished all my harvest.'"

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So, not only did he say, "Stay in my field, glean among my reapers," but also, "Stay here for the entire harvest. Not just one day or a week, but the entire harvest." That is quite an honor! He told his guys, "Hey, drop some down as you go, so that she has something to glean, and let her glean among you, not back there with the other gleaners."

**Ruth 2:22** And Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his young women, and that people do not meet you in any other field."

Here Naomi, who is also a type of the church, says, "It is a good thing that you stay in Boaz' field, and that you stay among Boaz' people. It is a good thing." She is repeating what the type of Christ told her—listen! It is repeated again.

**Ruth 2:23** So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.

Ruth listened. Ruth, a type of Christian, stayed with her mother-in-law, a type of the church. There are all kinds of interesting pieces coming together in this book.

To recap, what have we seen here? Boaz grants her permission to glean in his field. Is that not what we are doing today—has not Christ given us permission to glean in His field? When we are gleaning, we are picking up morsels and tidbits here and there of information and knowledge during church services—during the sermonette and sermon, when we hear special music, and in the singing of hymns. All these things are little bits of gleaning that we are doing.

He admonishes her not to stray from his field, meaning, stay in the church. Do not leave the house!

He says to stay among his young women, meaning that fellowship is very important. Stay by the young women because they will help you, protect you, and they might correct and admonish you. But it is the best place to be.

This is an especially important concept now, I think, as we become more scattered among the nation and around the world. Remember Hebrews 10:25? It is very interesting to look at this scripture in light of the events of our day:

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**Hebrews 10:25** "Not forsaking the assembling of yourselves together, as is the manner of some."

Have we not seen much of that lately?

**Hebrews 10:25** "But exhorting one another, and so much the more, as we see the day approaching.

It is high time now to stay behind the reapers! Remain in his field. Do not leave the house!

Remember Malachi 3:16?

**Malachi 3:16** Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD listened and heard them; so a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and who meditate on His name.

So, God wrote them into His Book of Remembrance. And He made them His special jewels. Assembling, speaking, and working together as gleaners in the same field is very important.

Boaz also warns the young men not to harm her because she is under his protection. The young men, here, are types of leaders and ministers in the church. How often do we see in the Bible God warning the shepherds, "You take care of the flock" and "Do not abuse your authority"? So, he had to warn his young men, those in charge of the reapers, "Be careful with my people. Be gentle with my gleaners. They are here to do a work, and you must take care of them. Provide for their needs, take care of them, and do not harm them."

The code among medical doctors is, "Do no harm." It is part of the Hippocratic Oath. It would be better to do nothing if what you contemplate would cause harm. Unfortunately, that is not always followed, but that is a similar idea to what Boaz is saying above. Do no harm. "Do not harm my gleaners."

I Peter 5:1-4 is where you will find Peter paraphrasing Christ, "Guard the sheep, and do not hurt them, because you are responsible for them."

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Boaz also tells Ruth that she can glean even among the sheaves, which is a very special and uncommon blessing. We have already gone over this a bit. But, how much does God seem to heap blessings upon us at times to enable us to work and prosper?

**Ephesians 3:14-21** For this reason I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with might through His Spirit in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith; that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may be able to comprehend with all the saints what is the width and length and depth and height—to know the love of Christ which passes knowledge; that you may be filled with all the fullness of God. Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us, to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

This is the kind of goodness and kindness and giving that Boaz was showing to Ruth. He went above and beyond providing more than she ever dreamed would happen when she went to ask to glean in his field. He just heaped the blessings upon her.

Then, we also saw that he tells his reapers to let extra grain drop so that she could glean it. She returned to Naomi with an *ephah* of grain. One commentary said that that was enough grain to last the two of them for several weeks. It might have been that one day of gleaning could have gotten them through the entire harvest, but Boaz the type of Christ just heaped it on her, giving her more than she could use, and much for many days to come.

Jesus said, "I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to me shall never hunger." And when Ruth went to Boaz, she never hungered again.

Now, listen to what Naomi says about Boaz:

**Ruth 3:18** Then she said, "Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day."

The man—"Behold, the man!"—will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.

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**Philippians 1:6** being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Now, we have not even considered Boaz yet as redeemer. We have just talked about his unilateral work on our behalf. He has not done any redeeming yet. And he is done all this, heaping the blessings, given her so much, and we have not even talked about him being the redeemer yet.

### III. THE HOLY SPIRIT GIVEN

I said above that we would see this in type.

Hebrews 8:7-10 says that the fault in the Old Covenant was really in the people who made it. And God goes on to say there that He would give them a spirit and a heart of flesh in order to keep it. So, on the day of Pentecost AD 31, God opened up His Spirit to the church of God, and suddenly the apostles understood what Christ had been teaching for the past three and a half years. It was almost as if a light switch had clicked on. Suddenly, Peter had his sermon already prepared in his head. And he just launched into it, preaching the gospel. All he needed was that spark, and the man was on fire.

It says in Acts 17:6 that those men turned the world upside down. They were just full of zeal, and they did a great work in the earth.

Now, no such tremendous miracle happens in Ruth, but there is a hint of it (which we have already read) in symbolic form, but it fits into the story where Boaz and Ruth are like Christ and the church—in symbol, Ruth receives the Holy Spirit from Boaz. In this next passage, Boaz is giving her instructions just after he commands her, "Listen, I have instructions for you."

**Ruth 2:9** "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn."

"I am going to give you water, and I am going to give you instruction." Who were the workers who went to get this water? They were the young men. They are the ministers. They are the ones who usually preach. And if she got the Holy Spirit—the water—she would be able to be instructed and continue working.

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Here, in this one little phrase at the end of verse 9, in type, Boaz gives the Holy Spirit to Ruth. Reference John 7 and the passage that concerns itself with the Last Great Day:

**John 7:37-39** On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water." But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

Notice this parallel between Ruth 2:9 and John 7:37: "If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink." What did Boaz say? "And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink." It is almost the same exact phrasing. So, what I see here is a clear type of Christ telling a clear type of a Christian to drink freely of a type of the Holy Spirit.

How does this benefit Ruth? It gave her refreshment, encouragement, and strength. It enabled her to do more gleaning—able to go and study and learn more (in our context). It enabled her to have constant contact with Boaz. She did not have to go back into town to get a drink. It was right there in the field. She did not have to go away from Boaz to get water, but was able to stay right there in the field among the other reapers and gleaners and young men, get a drink and be refreshed, strengthened, and helped. She would stay right there and have everything that she needed.

He supplied the food, he supplied the drink, he supplied the work, and he also supplied himself (later on in chapter 3). So, here we see the Holy Spirit given in the Old Covenant—in type, but it is there.

#### **IV. Gentiles and the Covenant**

Remember I told you to keep the idea that Ruth was not an Israelite in your mind? Well now, we are going to see why.

Ruth was a foreigner. She was a Moabitess. In fact, her name is mentioned twelve times in the book, and five times it is not just Ruth, but it is Ruth the Moabitess. It is very specific about that. Her non-Israelite heritage is constantly stressed, and so another theme of the book is her status as an alien. She was a stranger with the covenant.

**Ruth 2:2** So Ruth the Moabitess

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**Ruth 2:6** the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi

**Ruth 2:10** "I am a foreigner"

**Ruth 2:11** "you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before."

**Ruth 2:13** "though I am not like one of your maidservants."

**Ruth 2:21** Ruth the Moabite

Through an entire chapter, we are constantly being reminded that this woman is not an Israelite. She does not come under the covenant. Why? The following verse lists a portion of the people excluded from the congregation of Israel:

**Deuteronomy 23:3** "An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter the assembly of the LORD; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the LORD forever, . . ."

Keep the Ammonites and the Moabites out! Even to the tenth generation, none of them shall enter the congregation of the Lord forever. Commentators think that this tenth generation does not mean that you can count down 10 generations, but because they could not enter the congregation *forever*, therefore the tenth generation is generic—it could go on and on. That is tough. Why?

**Deuteronomy 23:4-6** ". . . because they did not meet you with bread and water on the road when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. Nevertheless the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you [*chesed*, covenant loyalty], because the LORD your God loves you. You shall not seek their peace [this is getting worse] nor their prosperity all your days forever."

Keep the Moabites and the Ammonites out of Israel. Do not even seek their peace. Do not even hope that they prosper.

So how did Ruth ever come into the congregation of Israel? She is a Moabite. Ten

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generations is a long time. That is, forever. She'd be dead in ten generations. It could not help her a bit even if it were not forever. King David could not either, then, because he did not come after the tenth generation. This sets up quite a quandary here.

She is accepted by the people immediately when she comes into town. She will be married to a prominent, wealthy citizen. Everybody knows Boaz. He goes to the city gate, with the near kinsmen, with ten elders of the city, and a huge crowd gathers.

He has something to say. He has got some business to do publicly with his near kinsmen. Boaz redeems Ruth and marries her. She entered the congregation of the Lord in her own generation. Amazing!

At the end of the book, she is lauded and praised because she has become the ancestor of king David, the greatest king and the founder of a great dynasty that is still to this day in this world ruling over a large portion of Israel. And we have our Savior, the King of Kings, Jesus Christ, to sit on that throne forever.

She is very fondly mentioned not only at the end of this book, but in Christ's genealogy in Matthew 1, she is specifically mentioned by name among three women, as an ancestor of Christ: Rehab, Ruth, and "the wife of Uriah." (That is interesting too. It did not say "Bathsheba," but only "the wife of Uriah.") There seems to be no stigma whatsoever. Why? Why was she able to come into the congregation of Israel? *How* did she come into the congregation of the Lord?

Remember, I told you that these things prefigure the New Covenant in an Old Covenant book.

**Ephesians 2:11-12** Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands—that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world.

Before Ruth met Naomi, she had no clue about Israel or Israel's God. She was a Gentile. She was a foreigner. She was an alien from the covenant. She was on the outs altogether.

**Ephesians 2:13-15** But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who

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has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation, having abolished in His flesh the enmity,

**Ephesians 2:4-7** But God, who is rich in mercy [think *chesed*], because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace [think all those things Boaz heaped upon her] that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness [*charis*; *chesed*] toward us in Christ Jesus.

Even though most of us are probably Israelites, we were like Ruth, undeserving of becoming one of God's children. We were estranged from the covenant. We were probably in a false church somewhere. We were breaking God's laws, we were doing everything wrong, but He in His mercy plucked us up and grafted us into Israel once again.

Remember that it says that God calls the Gentiles? Why? To provoke Israel to jealousy and repent. Who was called? Ruth the Moabitess.

Look at her wonderful example. What we have here is Ruth's conversion.

**Ruth 1:16-17** But Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. [Listen to this very strong oath:] The **LOORD** do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me."

She was a woman. She could not be circumcised to enter the congregation of Israel, but what she did do was make a most solemn oath. She renounced all her gods, all her people, and said that she would follow Naomi wherever she went. Remember Naomi is a type of the church, too. "Your people, all the members of the church, will be my people. I have left my people, and have taken your people as mine." And most importantly she saves the best for last, "Your God will be my God. They will be one and the same."

Scholars think that she became a proselyte. I do not like that. She was converted. She was joined to the church. And then, she had strived to strongly fulfill the terms of the covenant, and she married an Israelite, Boaz, the type of Christ. We do the same thing, do we not? We not only make the solemn vow and baptism, but we become betrothed to Christ—and that wipes away our past. That wipes away our Gentile-ness. Now we are made near. We are part of the Family. We are part of the congregation. And, we are one with all the rest of the body of Christ—the Israel of God (Galatians 6:16)—we are part of the Family of God-who-is-King—Elimelech. Is that not neat?

There is no mention of her unacceptability in Israel. Boaz openly ate with her and served her. Remember, he gave her all these things in chapter 2. He had already made up his mind that she was an Israelite, because of her character. She was more Israelite in her character than many of the rest of Israel was. He saw in her covenant loyalty. One of the first things he tells her is, "I have been told by all these people what you have done! And you have shown kindness [covenant loyalty] to the living and the dead. You are an Israelite of Israelites, even though you are of Moab!"

And so, Boaz had no problem taking her as his wife. He saw in her more of an Israelite than many of those other reapers that he had around him. He was doing what God had said. That literal division had been completely taken away, and Boaz had no compunction at all about marrying her because, as far as he was concerned, she was one of them. And of course, her conduct proved it.

There we have the reason Ruth was so acceptable to Israel, to the people of Bethlehem, which is similar to what happens to us when we are converted. All the past is forgotten. We become the new man. We become part of the natural olive tree again part of the Family of God-is-King.

This is so neat. There is so much in it. I hope that it has been more than an exercise in types to you. I hope that you can see that God has had in mind all along what He was going to do to save the world—not just Israel—but those Gentiles who had been estranged from the covenant. He had this in mind from the very beginning. He just went through it in these steps to teach us a few things here and there. He always had this door open to those who were willing to come under the covenant.

**Romans 15:4** For whatever things were written before [like the book of Ruth] were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.

The story of Ruth does just that. We do have hope as long as we are in God's church.

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We have hope of eternal redemption that Christ, like Boaz, is our Redeemer, and we also have hope of our soon-coming marriage to our Boaz, Jesus Christ.