



Ruth 4:1-11

(1) Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came 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 close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech. (4) And I thought to inform you, saying, "Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if you will not redeem *it*, *then* tell me, that I may know; for *there is* no one but you to redeem *it*, and I *am* next after you."" And he said, "I will redeem *it*." (5) Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance." (6) And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem *it*." (7) Now this *was the custom* in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave *it* to the other, and this *was* a confirmation in Israel. (8) Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." So he took off his sandal. (9) And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You *are* witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. (10) Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You *are* witnesses this day." (11) And all the people who *were* at the gate, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. The LORD make the woman who is coming to your house like Rachel and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel; and may you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem.

New King James Version

This scene is typical of how most cultures, not only the Hebrews, have understood the

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idea of witnessing. These ten elders of the city—and, if we read between the lines in verse 11, all the people who were drawn to this event that Boaz set up—observed the negotiations and the transaction of the sandal between Boaz and the unnamed near kinsman. If there were ever a need for proof that Boaz had indeed jumped through all the legal hoops through which he needed to jump to procure the land of Elimelech and the hand of Ruth, he had ten expert, irreproachable witnesses from among the elders of the people. In fact, he had probably dozens more who had seen all this take place because it most likely took place at the gate of the city.

So, many people were able to see what had transpired and could testify that everything had been done above-board. In a way, these people functioned like today's notaries who witness a legal transaction, put their seal on a document, and sign it, verifying that, "Yes, I indeed saw this transaction take place, legally and above-board, etc." This is how witnessing is done, and this is what many, if not most, of the occurrences of the Old Testament Hebrew words for "witness," *'ed* and *'ud* (the noun and the verb, respectively), connote.

What happened here in Ruth 4 is very interesting in the fact that Boaz is a type of Christ. Boaz here chooses ten elders—Jews—respected men of the town to witness what he did. Remember, since this took place in Bethlehem, these Jews were probably kin of [David](#). In fact, Boaz himself was David's great-grandfather, but these people were all one big extended family, the family of Judah. Boaz took ten of them, ten men whose eyewitness testimony could not be gainsaid in any way, and these men then witnessed his redemption of the land and Ruth.

What is interesting is that [Jesus](#) did exactly the same thing, except that He chose twelve men of Judah from Galilee. They would do the same for Him, telling all who would hear that He had indeed redeemed His people. [Luke 24:44-49](#) shows that this is exactly what He did. While the normal, legal idea of witnessing appears in the New Testament, Jesus makes use of it to confirm the facts of His life and death to the whole world through His witnesses, the apostles.

— Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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[Principled Living \(Part 5\): Witnessing of God](#)



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