



"God looks at the clean hands, not the full ones."  
—Publilius Syrus

**04-May-12**

## **Christ as Righteous Judge**

For the past few weeks, we have been looking at the book of Ruth from the standpoint of the countdown to Pentecost, and in the last essay, from the standpoint of Boaz being a type of Christ. This essay continues our consideration of Boaz' actions toward Ruth, which can give us insight into the character of our Savior, particularly in His office of Judge. As the apostle Peter writes, "For the time has come for judgment to begin at the house of [God](#)" ([I Peter 4:17](#)), and this aspect of Christ's work appears in type in the story of Ruth.

[Ruth 2:10-13](#) follows Boaz' five instructions to Ruth, covered in last week's essay:

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?" 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, 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. The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of

Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." 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."

His words had gone straight to Ruth's heart; he had reached her in her innermost being. As a newcomer to Israel, she wanted acceptance, help, and instruction, and he provided everything she needed.

Clearly, Boaz has knowledge of Ruth, her activities, and her character beyond what his servant had told him earlier. In fact, the text gives the impression that Boaz knows practically everything there is to know about Ruth. He has full knowledge of her; all the facts are at his disposal. This is an instance in which the type is obvious: Boaz is so knowledgeable as to be nearly omniscient. The four gospels frequently tell us that [Jesus](#) knew things that an ordinary human would not. [Luke 6:8](#) says of Him, "But He knew their thoughts. . . ." The apostle John writes, "He knew all men, . . . for He knew what was in man" ([John 2:24-25](#)).

Boaz, it appears, has some of the same attributes. In [Ruth 2:12](#), he makes a judgment based on his perfect knowledge. His judgment, which is framed as his desire, is that God will bless her and reward her for her sacrifices and her works. As Ruth acknowledges in verse 13, his judgment is an articulation of his favor, which is a general synonym for "grace." Her question to Boaz in verse 10 could just as easily have been written, "Why have I found grace in your sight?" In both deeds and words, Boaz shows her favor or grace, just as Christ extends to us.

This surprises Ruth because she is self-conscious about her foreignness. She mentions it twice in four verses, saying "since I am a foreigner" (verse 10) and "though I am not like one of your maidservants" (verse 13). He, however, does not mention it at all. To the contrary, Boaz praises her for having such strong convictions that she was able to forsake the land of her birth to join with people that she had never known before (verse 11). This sounds a great deal like Jesus' instruction in [Luke 14:26](#): "If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and

sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple." Ruth was a paragon of this very virtue, willing to forsake her worldly family to join the people of Israel, a type of the church of God ([Galatians 6:16](#)).

[Ruth 3:2](#) sets the stage for Boaz' role in the next chapters. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, is speaking: "Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor." Boaz is winnowing the threshed grain. Winnowing is essentially cleaning the grain by taking the threshed grain and throwing it up into the wind, which blows away the chaff while allowing the grain to fall back to the ground where it can be gathered and used. Boaz, then, is shown separating the wheat from the chaff. It is a picture of judgment.

The psalmist Asaph writes in [Psalm 83:13](#) of Israel's enemies, "O my God, make them like the whirling dust, like the chaff before the wind!" In the same vein, Isaiah says of sinful Israelites, "Therefore, as the fire devours the stubble, and the flame consumes the chaff, so their root will be as rottenness, and their blossom will ascend like dust; because they have rejected the law of the LORD of hosts" ([Isaiah 5:24](#)). John the Baptist speaks of Jesus as a winnower of men: "One mightier than I is coming. . . . His winnowing fan is in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire" ([Luke 3:16-17](#)).

In this figure, the author of Ruth (who may have been Samuel) is indicating that Boaz is an able judge, one who makes righteous decisions. In the next two chapters, he will make a truly significant judgment. Taking all the evidence that is before him, he will separate the wheat from the chaff and choose to perform a service of profound consequence, to redeem the property of Elimelech, which obligates him to marry Ruth, the widow of Elimelech's heir. This not only decides Ruth's future, but also the future of his house, of Israel, and ultimately of [the world](#).

Notice his joyful words when Ruth asks him to redeem her:

Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more [kindness](#) at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter,

do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. ([Ruth 3:10-11](#))

Boaz praises her "kindness," which is the Hebrew word *chesed*, implying "covenant loyalty." She had shown herself true to her adopted family and to Israel by choosing Boaz over a younger man. The covenant said that as a widow, she had to marry the near kinsman, and she obeyed it to the letter. Spiritually, we could say that she acted contrary to the normal course of this world (see [Ephesians 2:1-3](#)), doing what was good and right rather than following her carnal desires.

He reassures her, saying, "Do not fear" (see [Luke 12:32](#)), for he would do everything that she requested (see [John 14:13-14](#)). Then he makes another judgment: He agrees that she is virtuous. In the spiritual type, he pronounces her righteous, which redemption and justification through the blood of Christ accomplishes. And in the morning, he makes it his chief aim to make her his bride. So does Christ work to bring His church into the Family of God, judging us worthy to live eternally with Him ([Ephesians 5:25-32](#); [Revelation 19:7-9](#)).

- Richard T. Ritenbaugh

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## From the Archives: Featured Sermon

### [Examining God's Judgments](#)

by John W. Ritenbaugh

Judgment includes the actual process of handing down a decision. In this aspect of judgment, sanctification and purification bring about a restoration or refreshing in which liberty and reconciliation is restored. The seven reconciliations, or regatherings include: (1) Judah and Jesus Christ, (2) Israel and Judah, (3) Israel, Assyria, and Egypt, (4) All nations, (5) Man and nature, (6) Families, and (7) Ultimately God and mankind. We can accelerate this process by fearing God and keeping his commandments (Ecclesiastes 12: 13).

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## **From the Archives: Featured Article**

### **[The Elements of Motivation \(Part Seven\): Fear of Judgment](#)**

by John W. Ritenbaugh

The first six element of motivation were positive, but the last in negative. John Ritenbaugh explains that our fear of being judged negatively by our Judge should spur us to greater obedience and growth toward godliness.

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