

● Lesson 22

RUTH: A STORY OF REDEMPTION

The small book of Ruth is placed after the book of Judges because the events in this book took place during the time of the judges. It is a wonderful story about ordinary people that shows how Yahweh, the God of Israel, was a God who lovingly provided for His children. It also gives us a picture of what God has done for each one of us.

Let's read the story together in the words of the people who lived it!

ELIMELECH: Naomi, my wife, we can't stay here in Bethlehem any longer. There's no food. We'll starve to death before this famine is over!

NAOMI: But where can we go? Is it any better anywhere else?

ELIMELECH: I've heard that there is plenty in the land of Moab. We'll start for there in the morning.

NARRATOR: So Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, journeyed to Moab. There great **misfortune** came to Naomi. Her husband died. Several years later, her sons also died. They had married Moabite women. Now all Naomi had left were her two daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth. When she heard that the Lord was providing food for her people in Judah, she decided to return there. So Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth began their journey to the land of Judah.

Memory Verse

In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace which He lavished on us.
Ephesians 1:7-8a

NAOMI: We're soon entering my country. Go back now, my daughters, to your families. May the Lord deal kindly with you as you have dealt with my sons and me. May the Lord grant that you find rest, each in the house of her husband.

RUTH: No. We'll go back to your people with you, Naomi.

ORPAH: Yes, Naomi. We'll go with you to Judah.

NAOMI: Go back to your homes. Why would you want to come with me? I can't provide other husbands for you.

NARRATOR: They all wept together. Orpah decided to return to Moab, but Ruth stayed with Naomi.

NAOMI: Look, Ruth. Orpah is going back. Go with her!

RUTH: No, please don't make me leave you! I will go where you go. Your people shall be my people and your God, my God. I will die where you die and be buried there. Nothing except death is going to separate us!

NARRATOR: So the two continued on together until they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

RUTH: Naomi, we need something to eat. Let me go and pick up leftover grain behind the harvesters.

NARRATOR: It was a custom for landowners to allow the poor to pick up the grain that was left over from the threshers. So Ruth went out to glean in the fields and happened to end up in a field belonging to a wealthy man named Boaz.

BOAZ (to a field worker): May the Lord be with you!

FIELD WORKER: May the Lord bless you.

BOAZ: Who is the young woman there picking up grain after the harvesters?

FIELD WORKER: She is the young woman from Moab who came back with Naomi. She asked permission to glean here this morning and has been working hard all day.

BOAZ: Ruth, welcome to my fields. Don't go anywhere else to glean. Stay with my servant girls. I have instructed the men to leave you alone. There's water if you get thirsty. Help yourself.

RUTH: Why are you being so kind to me, a foreigner?

BOAZ: I've heard about all the good things you've done for your mother-in-law, Naomi. May the Lord bless you in return.

NARRATOR: Ruth worked all day in Boaz's fields. After **threshing** out the grain she had picked up, she had a good amount to bring home to Naomi.

NAOMI: Where did you work today?

1405 B.C.

Israel enters Promised Land

Conquest of the Promised Land

1375 B.C.

Joshua dies

Grain Harvest in Ancient Canaan

Harvesting grain in Canaan took place in April and May and involved several steps:

- cutting ripened grain with a **sickle**; usually done by men
- binding grain into **sheaves**; usually done by women
- **gleaning** or gathering leftover grain stalks
- transporting sheaves to the threshing floor
- threshing or loosening grain from the straw; usually done by the treading of cattle
- **winnowing** or tossing grain into the air with a fork so the wind would blow away the straw and chaff, leaving the kernels behind
- sifting grain to remove foreign material
- bagging grain for storage



RUTH: In Boaz's fields.

NAOMI: The Lord bless him! He is a close relative.

NARRATOR: The closest male relative was called a **kinsman-redeemer**. A kinsman-redeemer was responsible for helping family members in need. Sometimes he would even marry a female relative who had been widowed in order to provide for her. We'll talk more about that later. Now Ruth continued to glean in Boaz's fields until the end of harvest, and she lived with her mother-in-law, Naomi.

NAOMI: My daughter, I need to find a home for you where you will be secure. Boaz is a kinsman of ours. I want you to go to the threshing floor tonight. When he lies down to sleep on the threshing floor, go and uncover his feet and then wait. He will tell you what to do.

NARRATOR: So Ruth did as Naomi requested. This was a symbolic act showing Ruth's willingness to place herself under the protection of Boaz.

BOAZ (startled): Who are you?

RUTH: I am your servant, Ruth. I am asking you to make me your wife.

BOAZ: The Lord bless you! You could have chosen someone younger. Everyone knows you are a woman of noble character. It will be my honor to do as you ask. However, there is a man who is more closely related than I.

Stay here tonight, and I will check with him in the morning. If he does not want to redeem you, I will gladly do it!

NARRATOR: In the morning, Boaz sent Ruth home with more barley for her and Naomi. Meanwhile, he went to the city gates where men gathered to **transact** business. He sat down to wait for the man he had mentioned.

BOAZ: My friend, it is good to see you! Come, sit for a minute. I have something to ask you.

NARRATOR: Then Boaz invited ten other men to listen to their conversation.

BOAZ (speaking to his kinsman): Naomi is selling the land that belonged to our brother Elimelech. You have first chance at buying it since you are more closely related to Naomi than I. Would you like to redeem it?

KINSMAN: Yes, I surely would.

BOAZ: Of course, with the land also comes the widow, Ruth, from Moab. You must take her as your wife as well.

KINSMAN: Then I cannot redeem it. I already have a wife and family, and I want my property to go to my sons. You buy it yourself. Here is my sandal as a sign that we have made this deal. This will make our agreement legal here in Israel.

NARRATOR: Now in earlier times in Israel, for the

1100 B.C.

1060 B.C.

Ruth

Samuel born

Period of Judges

redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.

BOAZ (turning to the other men): You are all witnesses today that I have bought Naomi's property and that Ruth will be my wife. Our first son will carry her dead husband's name, so his name will be carried on with his property.

NARRATOR: So Boaz and Ruth were married. They had a son named Obed. Everyone praised God for how He had provided for Naomi and Ruth.

1. Study the following verses and list the ways God provided for Naomi and Ruth. Notice how the Lord was in control of all the events in their lives.

Ruth 1:22 _____

Ruth 2:3, 19-20 _____

Ruth 2:8-9 _____

Ruth 4:9-10 _____

Ruth 4:13 _____

Matthew 1:1, 5-6 _____

Ruth, who had once been a **heathen** from Moab but was now devoted to Yahweh, the one true God, is listed in the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah. King David and Jesus Christ are listed as descendents of Ruth and Boaz.

Fast Fact: Kinsman-redeemer

- The Hebrew word for kinsman-redeemer is *goel*. It means to "buy back," "redeem," or "to protect."
- A kinsman-redeemer was responsible for helping family members who were in need.
- For example, if a man died without a son, he had no one to carry on the family name and property. His widow was left alone with no one to care for her. A close relative of her husband (kinsman-redeemer) could buy the land of the deceased and marry the widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-6). When a boy was born to this marriage, he was considered the deceased man's son and became his heir. Thus the family name would continue, and the ancestral lands would not pass on to strangers.

2. How has God provided for you? _____

Catechism Corner

1. With what means has Christ redeemed us? (Q. 166)

He has paid for our sins with His holy and precious blood and His innocent death, and He has fulfilled the Law in our place with His holy life and His perfect obedience.

2. Whom has Christ redeemed? (Q. 167)

He has redeemed me, a lost and condemned sinner.

3. How does Boaz as a redeemer give us a picture of Christ our Redeemer? _____

Word Works

God can teach us many lessons through the story of Ruth. The puzzles below reveal two important lessons.

Cross out every third letter in the line below. Then write the remaining letters in the space provided to find the first lesson we can learn.

G O L D P A R O S V I T D E G S

Use the code to find the second lesson we can learn from this story. Each letter is equal to its number in the alphabet. (A=1, B=2, etc.)

P+2 D+1 G-3 A+4 O-2 L+4 Z-6 N-5 P-1 G+7

Boaz redeemed Ruth because he loved her and wanted to help her. By buying her dead husband's property back and marrying her, he would see that she was taken care of the rest of her life.