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## **Ruth 4**

(2019)

Bible House of Grace contains an easy to read New and Old Testament commentary full of spiritual treasures and pearls, complete with an insightful resource guide illuminating God's love and grace.



Although I believe my aim is pure and God's will perfect this document is still the product of a human man, as to such I neither claim perfect knowledge or perfect understanding.

## Ruth 4.

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### Topics.

- Boaz takes ten elders and sits down with Ruth's near redeemer.
  - The near redeemer tells Boaz to take his right of redemption to himself.
  - The near kinsman takes off his sandal and gives it to Boaz.
  - Boaz buys Elimelech, Chilion and Mahlon land and takes Ruth to wife.
  - May the LORD make Ruth, like Rachel and Leah, who built up Israel.
  - May Ruth's offspring be like the house of Perez.
  - Ruth's son is named Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David.
  - Overview of the book of Ruth.
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**INTRODUCTION:** the book of Ruth (an ancestor of Christ) tells the story of a young Moabite widow who, out of love for Naomi, her widowed Israelite mother-in-law, abandons her own culture, declaring, "Your people shall be my people, and your God my God" (1:16). In the days of the judges, Elimelech and Naomi with their sons Mahlon and Chilion left Bethlehem Judah because of famine and went to Moab. Mahlon and Chilion marry Moabite woman, Orpah and Ruth. After ten years Naomi's husband and her two sons died. Naomi leaves the land of Moab with Ruth and returned to Bethlehem Judah. On arriving, she refers to herself as Mara because she felt the LORD had dealt bitterly with her. The good character of Ruth captures the attention of Boaz, a close relative of her deceased husband. Boaz fulfils the role of kinsman-redeemer and takes Ruth as his wife. Ruth serves as a wonderful example of God's providential care of His people, and of His willingness to accept Gentiles who seek him. The author is unknown though traditionally ascribed to Samuel the genealogy at the end suggests that it was written during or after the time of David.

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**NOTE:** for information concerning people, places and the meaning of words see Map Locations and People of the Bible, and Bible Dictionary on Website Menu.

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**The previous chapter:** focuses on Naomi telling Ruth to go and lie at the feet of Boaz and wait until he tells her what to do. Ruth goes to Boaz and lays at his feet, then says, "spread your wings over your servant." Boaz tells Ruth to return to her mother in law, because there is a redeemer nearer than him. The chapter ended with Ruth returning to Bethlehem while Boaz sought out the nearer redeemer in the city.

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### RUTH 4:1-2

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#### **Boaz takes Ten Elders and Sits down with Ruth's Near Redeemer.**

- **Ruth 4:1-2:** 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. <sup>2</sup> And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

The redeemer, of who Boaz had spoken refers to the near kinsman redeemer Boaz told Ruth about in the previous chapter who was a redeemer nearer to her than Boaz was. This near kinsman redeemer came

by the gate while Boaz was sitting there patiently waiting for him. It is possible that Boaz was aware of the time that this kinsman redeemer would be going to his field to oversee his reapers and winnowers, as Boaz, and no doubt many other overseers of their fields had been doing.

**NOTE:** we are not given the name of the near redeemer, some suppose this was because:

- The writer of this history may not have known it or if he did, he did not think it necessary to give it.
- The near kinsman redeemer chose not to raise up seed to his kinsman, to perpetuate his name, therefore his own name was deliberately not recorded.
- His name is purposely concealed in his favour, so that he would not be known, and lie under disgrace, for refusing to act the part of a near redeemer according to the law.

**Boaz had gone up to the gate:** (v1) he is said to go up because the town of Bethlehem stood on a hill, likewise in (Ruth 3:3) Naomi told Ruth to go down to the threshing-floor. People were continually passing through the gate of the city from various countries, and where he was most likely to meet with the man he wanted to see and where it was proper to sort such matters out amongst many witnesses. In Oriental cities the gate was not a gate as we think of gates today, but a large roofed area without walls where in ancient times and in many Eastern towns they used to go in and out of the town. It was the common place where the people assembled during these ancient times to for the following purposes:

- To discuss Scripture and settle disagreements and disputes.
- To hold conversations with each other and discuss what is happening in surrounding towns and villages.
- To meet for business transactions and for settling legal disputes and matters of justice.

Though we are not given the near kinsman redeemer name it is most likely that Boaz knew it and after making earlier enquires around the small town of Bethlehem had a good idea of the time that he would be passing through the cities gate. When the near kinsman did arrive, Boaz gathered ten elders and they sat down together to discuss the matter, for it had to be settled according to the legal laws given by Moses concerning inheritances.

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## RUTH 4:3-4

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### **Ruth's Near Redeemer tells Elders, He will Buy Elimelech's Land.**

- **Ruth 4:3-4:** 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 (brother in KJV) Elimelech. <sup>4</sup> So I thought I would tell you (advertise thee in KJV) 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."

Boaz calls the near redeemer their brother, because he was near of kin to them and mentions Naomi's return out of the country of Moab, probably to highlight her poverty and need to sell her estate which her husband Elimelech had left her.

**Our brother:** (brethren in KJV) (*Hebrew 'ach*), literally means a brother, but in the widest sense embraces anyone who has an affinity or resemblance with each other, (i.e., of the same kindred, nation or the same faith, religion and worldview etc.). During these early ancient

generations, the Jewish nation viewed a Jewish man or woman as a brother and in the age of the New Testament the Roman Empire regarded their citizens (male or female) as brothers. The word, brothers was not used to differentiate between male and females (especially in the Scriptures of the Bible) unless the context specifically states it. It is a perfect expression for those in Christ since, brotherly love is love that protects, defends, guards and shelters, and is free from any romantic or sexual thought. It is in this sense that Boaz speaks of, "the parcel of land belonging to their brother Elimelech," because Elimelech was not their literal brother, but a very near kinsman or relative. Both Naomi and Ruth had an interest in this land during their lives, but only Naomi is mentioned, because all negotiations were done by her direction and Ruth wholly submitted herself to Naomi's counsel and advice. Boaz proposes that the nearest redeemer should redeem Elimelech's parcel of land immediately, because Naomi, as the representative of her deceased husband Elimelech, was now forced to sell the land to secure her future means of living. When an Israelite was forced by poverty to sell their possession, the next of kin had a right to redeem it by paying the value of the number of years remaining until the 50th year of jubilee. The nearest kinsman had the first right to redeem the land, if he refused, the next in line had the second right, and if he had refused, the next kinsman would have the third right, and so on. Boaz was second in line to redeem the land that Naomi was intending to sell, so he gives the nearer kinsman to him the option that the law granted to him of redeeming Elimelech's land according to the law.

- **Leviticus 25:25-28:** "If your brother becomes poor and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer shall come and redeem what his brother has sold. <sup>26</sup> If a man has no one to redeem it and then himself becomes prosperous and finds sufficient means to redeem it, <sup>27</sup> let him calculate the years since he sold it and pay back the balance to the man to whom he sold it, and then return to his property. <sup>28</sup> But if he does not have sufficient means to recover it, then what he sold shall remain in the hand of the buyer until the year of jubilee. In the jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his property.

In the previous chapter Boaz promised Ruth that he would go and give the near kinsman redeemer notice of Elimelech's land, and therefore purposed in his heart and mind to do so early that same day. However, for such a transaction to be firmly and legally established it had to be made in the presence of others. This is why Boaz met the near kinsman redeemer before the elders and the assembly of people gathered at the gate, that it would be legally and firmly established by many witnesses.

**He said, "I will redeem it."** (v4) the near redeemer was willing to redeem the land as a good investment, but when he is reminded that he had to take Ruth as his wife, to perpetuate the name of her deceased husband (Mahlon) and raise up seed by her according to the following law:

- **Deuteronomy 25:5:** "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

The following verses show that he declined the offer.

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## **RUTH 4:5-6**

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### **The Near Redeemer tells Boaz to Take His Right of Redemption.**

- **Ruth 4:5-6:** 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." <sup>6</sup> 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."

When the kinsman redeemer who agreed to buy the land was told that he also had to take Ruth the widow of Mahlon the son of Elimelech for his wife, so that a son would be born to inherit Mahlon's inheritance, he declined the offer. If Ruth had not been involved Naomi could have sold

the land without any conditions attached, but Ruth also had a part in the inheritance, since it would transfer to her upon Naomi's death and therefore it was the duty of the near redeemer to marry her and raise up seed to his brother, (i.e., his kinsman). He could not exercise his right of redeeming the land, unless he was willing to fulfil his duty to the deceased husband by marrying his widow.

**You also acquire Ruth the Moabite the widow of the dead:** (v5) to perpetuate the name of Mahlon in his inheritance according to the following law.

- **Deuteronomy 25:5:** "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her as his wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.

The day the redeemer purchased Naomi's field he must also take Ruth the Moabitess (now a proselyte to Israel) as his wife, for she was the wife of Mahlon who was now deceased who was the eldest son of Naomi, and now Mahlon's widow. In this sale Naomi had two purposes:

1. Firstly, to provide a good husband for Ruth her daughter-in-law
2. Secondly, to perpetuate the name of Mahlon her son according to the law. In the book of Matthew, the Sadducees ask Jesus the following question:

- **Matthew 22:24-26:** Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies having no children, his brother must marry the widow and raise up offspring for his brother.' <sup>25</sup> Now there were seven brothers among us. The first married and died, and having no offspring left his wife to his brother. <sup>26</sup> So too the second and third, down to the seventh.

It was the duty of the redeemer to raise up and revive the name of the dead, which was lost and buried with his body, by raising up an offspring by his widowed wife who would inherit his estate.

**I cannot redeem it lest I impair my own inheritance:** (v6), following are four possible reasons that the kinsman redeemer declined the offer to buy Naomi's land.

1. He was a single man that was not rich and therefore would have to take the purchase-money from his own possession and be required to support both Naomi and Ruth which means that the little he did have would be greatly reduced, whereas Boaz being a noble man of wealth, was in a far better financial situation to afford this and he had already agreed to do so.

If he was married, he may have:

2. Declined taking Ruth as his wife for fear it might bring discord and strife into his family, especially if Ruth was beautiful and younger.
3. Feared taking a poor woman with a parcel of land, that in the fiftieth-year jubilee would revert back to the son he would raise up by Ruth, which would then greatly diminish the inheritance of any children he already had.
4. Knew that his family expenses would be greatly increased especially since he would be required to care for the aging Naomi, which means his income would be diminished, and Naomi's estate that he is now being asked to buy would eventually go to Ruth's firstborn.

The near redeemer may have declined to purchase Naomi's property for anyone of these reasons or a combination of some, and assigned the offer to Boaz because he was in a far better situation to marry Ruth and raise up seed to her and provide for her Naomi and any children Ruth may have had by him.

**The Near Kinsman Takes off His Sandal and Gives it to Boaz.**

- **Ruth 4:7-8:** 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 (was a testimony in KJV).<sup>8</sup> So when the redeemer (kinsman in KJV) said to Boaz, “Buy it for yourself,” he drew off his sandal.

**The principal of taking of a sandal:** when a man was negotiating with a buyer to sell his land, and the seller and buyer both came to an acceptable sale price and transaction, the seller would take off his sandal and offer it to the buyer, signifying that he was willing to sell the property, likewise, the buyer would receive the sandal from him, signifying that he agreed to the price and terms of the sale. Once this was completed the sale and whatever terms had been agreed upon became legally binding to both the buyer and the seller. So, after the near kinsman redeemer had declined the offer of purchasing the land and agreed to let Boaz buy the property, he would say to Boaz, “You buy it,” and when Boaz agreed, the near kinsman would take of his sandal and offer it to Boaz, if Boaz took the sandal the sale became legally binding to both the near kinsman and Boaz. The words, “now this was the custom in former times in Israel,” show that the custom was obsolete in the writer's days. Taking off his sandal and giving it to another symbolises the following things:

1. That the man giving the sandal that he had worn when he walked on the land had resigned his right to walk on the land as master, in favour of the man he was giving his sandal to. The man receiving the sandal signified that he was willing to enter into the transaction and take possession of the land himself. Symbolically it's as if he is saying, “Take this shoe that I walked over the land with and go and tread upon the land in the same shoe and take possession of it.”
2. For a transaction to be agreed upon it was sufficient for the man to take of his sandal and give it to the man to who he had relinquished his right to, in the presence of the elders of his city. It was a ceremony that confirmed that a transaction was agreed upon and was completed, it could be likened to the custom of those in the western world, shaking hands as a sign that a transaction had been agreed upon and was binding. When the kinsman redeemer refused to perform his duty to the family of his deceased relation, his widow was directed to pull off his shoe as a sign of contemptuous disdain.
  - **Deuteronomy 25:9:** then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face. And she shall answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.’

But, in this case Ruth, the deceased widow played no part, so the usual humiliation was spared. The reason Ruth did not remove the near redeemer's sandal, was most likely, because Boaz had previously told her that he would take her to wife and perform the duty of a near kinsman. Though the near kinsman did refuse, it was not counted as a refusal, because the near redeemer gave his right to Boaz who had previously agreed to take Ruth as his wife if the near kinsman declined the offer.

**This was the manner of attesting in Israel (was a testimony in KJV):** (v7) we do not know that there was such a law of God commanding such ceremony as this, but it was clearly a long-established custom to transfer one man's right of land to another. Some say it is the custom today amongst some Jews that a handkerchief or veil is given, when they purchase something instead of a shoe as a testimony in Israel and is sufficient evidence that a transaction had been agreed upon.

## **Boaz buys Elimelech Chilion, Mahlon Land and takes Ruth for Wife.**

- **Ruth 4:9-10:** 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. <sup>10</sup> 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.”

The elders and the people assembled at the gate of the city, were witnesses that Boaz had agreed to purchase all the land that belonged to Elimelech, who was the husband of Naomi, and the father of Ruth's husband, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's for their inheritance was in Israel. If Elimelech's two sons were still living they would have been able to enjoy their father's estate; but being dead, it transferred to Naomi their mother, and when she died transferred to the widows of her two sons, who must agree to the sale of the estate, as Ruth did.

**NOTICE:** Chilion widow Orpah was still living, yet no concern is paid to her regarding the administration of her husband's property to be granted to her. This no doubt is because she remained in Moab, and therefore was probably reckoned to have been married again, or to have renounced all right to an inheritance with the family of Elimelech. Added to this Mahlon, the husband of Ruth, was the elder brother, and therefore had the first right to the inheritance; but as it was in the hands of Naomi now, the purchase was made of her principally, for it was to her that the money was paid, and who delivered the estate to Boaz.

**Ruth the Moabitess have I purchased to be my wife:** (v10) Boaz had Ruth not as the right of a literal blood brother to Elimelech as mentioned in (Deut. 25:5), but as a remote kinsman of the same family. He, could not enjoy the land while Ruth lived, unless he took her with it, because it was her rightful inheritance while she lived, and was to go to her offspring when she died. Though Ruth was a Moabitess (a heathenish and idolatrous nation), Boaz did no wrong in marrying her for she had become a proselyte, forsaking the idols and gods of Moab and embracing the law of Moses and the God of Israel.

**To perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance:** (v10) to raise up the name of Mahlon, Ruth's previous husband, to who the inheritance would have come had he lived; the raising up of his name is not by a son of Ruth by Boaz, for her firstborn was called Obed, and not Mahlon, and he is always spoken of as the son of Boaz, and not of Mahlon, but upon Mahlon inheritance. Mahlon's name would be remembered in the following two ways:

1. When Ruth went in and out upon the estate (i.e., the inheritance), the people would say, “this was the wife of Mahlon,” and so through her, his name would be continually made mention of.
2. The fact Boaz bought Mahlon wife with his inheritance would be recorded in the contract of the purchase of the land and in this way cause his name to be remembered, every time the land transferred to a different heir.

In this way, the name of the dead would not be not cut off (forgotten) from among his people.

**From the gate of his native place:** (v10) refers to the gate of Mahlon's city Bethlehem-judah where this transaction was made in front of witnesses.

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### **RUTH 4:11**

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**May Ruth be like Rachel and Leah, who Built up Israel.**

- **Ruth 4:11:** 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 (famous in KJV) in Bethlehem,

The elders and people assembled at the gate, where the whole matter was carried out and the transfer of land was made complete, all concluded together that they were witnesses, both of the purchase of the estate by Boaz being legally made, and of the marriage of Ruth to him.

**May the LORD make Ruth, like Rachel and Leah:** (v11) though Rachel is the youngest and had the fewest children, she is set before Leah, for the following two reasons, firstly, though Jacob was deceived by Rachel’s father into marrying Leah first it was Jacobs intention that Rachel would be his first wife and according to the covenant he made with her father she should have been, so she was his more lawful wife, and his most beloved one. Secondly, Rachel is pictured in the prophecy of Jeremiah and Matthew as the mother of Israel weeping over her children spoken of in the following verses: -

- **Jeremiah 31:15:** Thus says the LORD: “A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation and bitter weeping. Rachel is weeping for her children; she refuses to be comforted for her children, because they are no more.”
- **Matthew 2:18:** “A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more.”

Rachel only had two children, Joseph and Benjamin and neither of them died before she did, which may make Jeremiah’s words written about a thousand years after her death, appear to some to be incorrect, but they can easily be harmonised in the following way. Rachel’s first son was Joseph.

- **Genesis 30:22-24:** Then God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb. <sup>23</sup> She conceived and bore a son and said, “God has taken away my reproach.” <sup>24</sup> And she called his name Joseph, saying, “May the LORD add to me another son!”

Later, Rachel died giving birth to her second son, Benjamin.

- **Genesis 35:17-18:** And when her labor was at its hardest, the midwife said to her, “Do not fear, for you have another son.” <sup>18</sup> And as her soul was departing (for she was dying), she called his name Ben-oni; but his father called him Benjamin.

So, we might wonder, “Why did Jeremiah say that she was weeping because her sons were no more?” The answer, begins with the fact that Racheal’s first son Joseph had two sons, Manasseh and Ephraim. (Gen. 41:50-52) (Gen. 48:13-20). In time, the tribe of Ephraim became the most powerful tribe of the Northern Kingdom of Israel and came to represent all ten tribes of the Northern Kingdom. The tribe that came from Rachel’s other son, Benjamin, became part of the Southern Kingdom of Judah. So, it could be said that Rachel symbolized all the mothers of Israel, both of the Northern Kingdom and of the Southern Kingdom, which means in Scripture she is pictured as the mother of Israel, (i.e., both of the two tribes of Judah and the ten tribes of Israel united together as one nation). By the time the book of Jeremiah was written, the Northern Kingdom of Israel had already been conquered by the Assyrians and many of its people were taken away captive. Sometime later the mighty armies of Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon conquered the southern two-tribes of Judah and the city of Jerusalem and took them captive for seventy years. Many of these were taken to the city of Ramah, about eight kilometres (5 miles) north of Jerusalem.

- **Jeremiah 40:1:** The word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD after Nebuzaradan the captain of the guard had let him go from Ramah, when he took him bound in chains along with all the captives of Jerusalem and Judah who were being exiled to Babylon.

It is certain some died and others were killed there in the territory of Benjamin where Rachel was buried.

- **1 Samuel 10:2:** When you depart from me today, you will meet two men by Rachel's tomb in the territory of Benjamin at Zelzah.

So, Rachel's weeping can refer to the following three events:

1. The sorrow that was felt over the death of all the Benjamites and of those killed near Ramah.
2. To all the mothers of Israel weeping over the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple of God and of God's people being taken into Babylonian captivity for seventy years.
3. To what happened hundreds of years later when Jesus was a small child, and King Herod commanded that all male children in Bethlehem on the south side of Jerusalem, up to two years of age were to be killed.

Ponder for a moment, the heartbreaking sound of those mothers crying because their sons were dead, they were "no more." It was as if those cries could be heard as far as Ramah, on the north side of Jerusalem (i.e., the weeping was so loud it was heard on opposite side of Jerusalem to where they were being killed).

- **Matthew 2:16-18:** Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious, and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem and in all that region who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had ascertained from the wise men.<sup>17</sup> Then was fulfilled what was spoken by the prophet Jeremiah:<sup>18</sup> "A voice was heard in Ramah, weeping and loud lamentation, Rachel weeping for her children; she refused to be comforted, because they are no more."

Rachel's "weeping for her children" is used in prophecy to describe the sadness of Jewish mothers over the death of their children both in Jeremiah's time and in Jesus' time,

**May the LORD make Ruth, like Rachel and Leah:** (v11) both Rachel and Leah were fruitful godly woman.

They are singled out for the following three reasons:

1. They were of a foreign origin, but were ingrafted into God's people, as Ruth was.
2. God promised Rachel and Leah more children (i.e., the twelve sons of Jacob) than their ancestors, Sarah and Rebecca.
3. Rachel and Leah were blessed with numerous children and future generations that built the house of Israel.

Rachel and Leah's two handmaids (Bilhah Rachel's servant and Zilpah Leah's servant) are not mentioned, because Rachel and Leah were Jacob's principal wives, and though Bilhah and Zilpah did give birth to some of the sons of Jacob they bore them not for themselves, but for their mistresses.

**The prayer:** "May the LORD make Ruth, like Rachel and Leah," (v11) was the usual bridal benediction, because these two wives of Jacob built the house of Israel by giving birth to the twelve sons of Israel who became the twelve tribes of Israel that formed the nation of Israel. Though some of the tribes sprung from their maids, which they gave to Jacob, the children born of them were reckoned to be Rachel and Leah's. By the children of these two godly women and their maidens, the house or family of Israel was built up, and became a great nation, consisting of twelve very numerous tribes.

**Build up the house of Israel:** (v11) carries the idea of building up sons and daughters of Israel in the present generations and by extension continue to increase future generations of Israel with multitudes of children.

**May you (Boaz) act worthily in Ephrathah and be renowned (famous in KJV) in Bethlehem:** (v11) the following verse shows that Ephrathah and Bethlehem are two names that refer to the same place.

- **Genesis 35:19:** So Rachel died, and she was buried on the way to Ephrath (that is, Bethlehem),

A similar statement is made in verse four concerning Boaz, "may his name be renowned in Israel!" The meaning of the prayerful words, "be famous and be renowned," carries the idea that Boaz name:

- Would be so celebrated in the city of Bethlehem and the nation of Israel, as the head of a powerful and majestic house that it would cause others to proclaim his good name.
- Would continue doing everything with valour, vitality strength and integrity of heart.
- Would continue to do worthy and virtuous acts, as well as increase in wealth, riches, power and authority.
- Would retain his name and fame and grow in good esteem among his fellow people.

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## **RUTH 4:12**

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**May Ruth's Offspring be like Perez, who Tamar bore to Judah.**

- **Ruth 4:12:** 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."

Following is a brief overview of Perez birth, taken from Genesis chapter thirty-eight. Judah gave his firstborn son Er, Tamar to be his wife, but Er, was wicked and the LORD put him to death. Then Judah said to Onan, "Go in to your brother's wife Tamar and perform the duty of a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother. But Onan wasted his semen on the ground so the LORD put him to death. Judah thinking Tamar his daughter-in-law was a prostitute, for she had covered her face went in to her and she conceived. Some three months later Judah was told, "Tamar his daughter-in-law is pregnant by immorality." Judah commands that she be burned. Tamar shows her father-in-law the gifts he gave her (his signet, his cord and his staff). Judah immediately identifies them and said, "She is more righteous than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah." When Tamar's labour came, there were twins in her womb, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, "This one came out first." But as he drew back his hand, his brother came out, and she said, "What a breach you have made for yourself!" Therefore, his name was called Perez, afterward his brother came out with the scarlet thread on his hand, and his name was called Zerah.

**Like the house of Perez:** (v12) Perez is mentioned here for the following four reasons:

1. Perez was born to Judah by Tamar, a woman of another nation, as Ruth was, yet God blessed his family with very numerous descendants.
2. He was a descendant of Boaz and an ancestor of the house of Judah.
3. Tamar gave birth to Perez by Judah whose tribe was of the Bethlehemites.
4. He became the heir of the eldest sons' inheritance and the head of the house of Judah.

**The offspring that the LORD will give you by this young woman:** (v12) the elders and fellow-townsfolk wish and pray that God would bless Boaz with an honourable and numerous families by his young wife Ruth as He had blessed Perez and Tamar.

**Ruth becomes Boaz Wife and She Conceives a Son.**

- **Ruth 4:13-15:** 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. <sup>14</sup> Then the women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer (kinsman in KJV),, and may his name be renowned (famous in KJV) in Israel! <sup>15</sup> 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.”

Though Ruth was a Moabite it was right and proper for Boaz to take her for his wife, because the prohibition against marrying such women was confined to those who continued in the heathenish worship of their idols and gods, whereas Ruth was a sincere proselyte and convert to the God of Israel and embraced their laws and customs.

**Boaz went in to Ruth:** (v13) this is a modest way of saying, he had sexual intercourse with her. There were no other marriage rites or ceremonies than what have previously been expressed; for at this time marriage rites and ceremonies that the Jews use today, were not yet established. During these early ancient times, when a man went into a woman with the intention of having children that woman was from then on considered to be his wife. The LORD gave Ruth conception, and she bore a son.

**The LORD, has not left you this day without a redeemer (kinsman in KJV):** (v14) some understand the redeemer to refer to Ruth’s new born son, while others suppose it refers to Boaz, since both have valid points, we will look at them separately.

1. **To Ruth’s new born child:** after Ruth bore a son, the women (of Bethlehem and that attended the birth of Ruth’s child), said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you this day without a redeemer (kinsman in KJV) (i.e., a grandchild). The word, kinsman, meaning near relative in this context is the better translation, for the next verse shows that the focus is Ruth’s new born child, because the woman pray that the name of the child (i.e., Obed) that Naomi’s daughter-in-law that loves her more than seven sons, has given birth to would be renowned in Israel and that he would be a restorer and nourisher to Naomi in her old age. In Moab Naomi was bereaved of her husband and of her two sons; but now she is not left without a relation that will care for her in her old age and for which the women blessed God.
2. **To Boaz:** some say the words, “who has not left you this day without a redeemer (kinsman in KJV), may be rendered, “who has not allowed your kinsman to fail you, meaning he has not refused to perform his duty to Ruth, as the other near kinsman did. In this context the name kinsman redeemer, more properly belongs to Boaz who performed the duty of a kinsman redeemer by redeeming the estate of his kinsman, and marrying Ruth his widow who gave birth to a son by him, who would be heir of the estate. The difficulty with this idea is that the women speak of what was done that day, and with reference to the child, which is probably why some translate the word kinsman to heir.

It matters little which is the correct interpretation because both contain a different truth, Boaz was a kinsman redeemer to her estate and the LORD, did leave Naomi with an heir (i.e., Obed her grandchild) who would nourish her in her old age.

**May his name be renowned (famous in KJV) in Israel:** (v14) amongst commentators there are differing thought as to who this applies to, following are the two most common: -

1. Boaz, who was well spoken of for his charity, integrity, and humility, shown in redeeming the estate, and taking Ruth to wife.

2. To the newborn child, of who they express their hope and confidence, that when he grew to claim his estate, he would be famous and honourable in Israel, which he was, for from his descendants came Jesse the father of David and from David's bloodline came the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ.

**He (Obed) shall be to you a restorer of life:** (v15) this is said with the hope that Ruth's child would inherit his mother's good qualities and faithful loyalty, especially her affection to Naomi. The words, "may he be to you a restorer of life," carry the following two ideas:

1. Naomi's grandchild would revitalise and restore the joys, pleasures, and comforts that she once had when her husband and sons were alive, for ever since they had been taken by death Naomi had lived a sorrowful life, but now with Ruth's new born child in her house her sorrowful spirit will again experience the joys of family life.
2. Being heir to a large and rich estate when Obed was grown-up, he would be able to supply and provide for Naomi and support and supply all the necessities of life that she would need.

**Your daughter-in-law who loves you, is worth more than seven sons:** (v15) Ruth the wife of Boaz, had shown Naomi love, in leaving her own country and kindred, to accompany her into a strange land, and laboured to support her and continues with the same great affection she had for her from the beginning, and now Ruth had given birth to Obed who is heir to the estate. Ruth is said to be worth more to Naomi than if she had seven sons living that had no paternal estate or inheritance, for Obed being the heir of the estate would when grown-up be a wealthy land owner and easily able to care for Naomi. Sometimes death will take someone we greatly love, but in time God brings into our life another that fills the heart.

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## RUTH 4:16-17

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### **Ruth's Son is Named Obed, Father of Jesse, Father of David.**

- **Ruth 4:16-17:** Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse.  
<sup>17</sup> And the women of the neighborhood 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.

**Obed:** means servant and workman.

Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, signifying her tender love and affection for him and nursed him either immediately after Ruth had given birth to him or as he grew, most likely both. From Ruth's bloodline came Obed the father of Jesse, the father of David from whose descendants came the Messiah the Christ and Saviour of the world. (Ruth 4:21-22). An age would come when the wonders and kindness Boaz showed to Ruth in the little town of Bethlehem-Judah would be superseded by far greater wonders and kindness when another lowly woman of the same race in the same small town of Bethlehem-Judah gives birth to child who will draw wise men from the East, with treasures of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to his feet, and whose name will endure forever, and in whose name all nations will be blessed.

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## RUTH 4:18-21

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### **Generations of Perez to Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse and David.**

- **Ruth 4:18-21:** Now these are the generations of Perez: Perez fathered Hezron,<sup>19</sup> Hezron fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminadab,<sup>20</sup> Amminadab fathered Nahshon, Nahshon fathered Salmon,<sup>21</sup> Salmon fathered Boaz, Boaz fathered Obed,

Some might wonder, "how can this be a true genealogy? Because three hundred and eighty years passed between Salmon and David and there is only four people mentioned. The answer to this apparent dilemma, is that it is not certain that each of these was the immediate parent of the son who he is said to have fathered, for sometimes in Scripture grandfathers are said to beget their grandchildren, by their immediate sons, and sometimes in genealogies whole generations are omitted, as appears by (Ezra 7:2) compared with (1 Chron 6:3) and (Matt. 1:8). This maybe be done to minimise the genealogy by mentioning only the leading men that are commonly known. It is also common in Scripture to be written, "grandfathers beget their grandchildren," without specifying the intermediate links.

**Perez:** (v18) was the son of Judah, by Tamar previously mentioned in (v12). The intention of this genealogy is not to give a detailed genealogy of all descendants, but to show that David by succession came from the house of Judah, for Perez (Pharez in KJV) was a son of Judah.

- **Genesis 46:12:** The sons of Judah: Er, Onan, Shelah, Perez, and Zerah (but Er and Onan died in the land of Canaan); and the sons of Perez were Hezron and Hamul.
- **Matthew 1:3:** and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram.

A record of Perez generations was kept to preserve the memory of the genealogy of David and to confirm the truth of Jacob's prophecy, that the Messiah would come from the tribe of Judah.

- **Genesis 49:10:** The scepter shall not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until tribute comes to him; and to him shall be the obedience of the peoples.

The genealogy begins with Pharez, well known to be the son of Judah, and ends with David, from whose bloodline the Messiah was to come from. In the King James Bible Perez is translated Phares; Zerah is translated Zara; Tamar is translated Thamar; Hezron is translated Esrom and Ram is translated Aram. (Matthew 1:3)

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## A BRIEF OVERVIEW OF THE NAMES OF MEN AND WOMAN

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**Amminadab:** (v20) Aaron was married to Aminadab's daughter Elisheba.

**Nashon:** (v20) called Nahshon in (Matt. 1:4), was one of the chosen ones from the children of Judah in the wilderness, the chiefs of their ancestral tribes, and heads of the clans of Israel. (Num. 1:7-16).

**Salamon:** (v21) (Heb., Salmah), called Salmon in the next verse, but in (1 Chron 2:11) called Salma in (KJV). There was an interval of three hundred eighty years between Salmon and David, which means that whole generations are omitted, it is not unusual in Scripture to mention only the distinguished names and pass over those of less note, and in the language of Scriptural genealogies grandfathers are sometimes said to beget their grandchildren, without specifying the intermediate links.

**Salmon fathered Boaz:** (v21) Matthew shows in his genealogy that Salmon married Rahab the harlot (Josh. 2:1) who gave birth to Boaz.

- **Matthew 1:5:** and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse.

It is possible that one of the reasons Boaz had no hesitation in marrying Ruth the Moabitess was because Rahab, his mother was a Canaanite. This genealogy recorded here in Ruth (v18-22), is repeated three other times in Scripture, for it is of singular importance, being the genealogy of the Lord.

1. **1 Chronicles 2:10-12:** Ram fathered Amminadab, and Amminadab fathered Nahshon, prince of the sons of Judah. <sup>11</sup> Nahshon fathered Salmon, Salmon fathered Boaz, <sup>12</sup> Boaz fathered Obed, Obed fathered Jesse.
2. **Matthew 1:3-6:** and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Ram, <sup>4</sup> and Ram the father of Amminadab, and Amminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, <sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, <sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of David the king. And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah.
1. **Luke 3:32-33:** the son of Jesse, the son of Obed, the son of Boaz, the son of Sala, the son of Nahshon, <sup>33</sup> the son of Amminadab, the son of Admin, the son of Arni, the son of Hezron, the son of Perez, the son of Judah.

**Boaz fathered Obed:** (v21) Obed means servant and workman. He was a son of Boaz and Ruth, and the father of Jesse, and grandfather of David and in the genealogies recorded in the Gospel of Matthew and the Gospel of Luke is named as one of Jesus' ancestors.

**Obed fathered Jesse:** (v22), Jesse the son of Obed was himself a Bethlehemite. He fathered David of who Matthew wrote in his genealogy, "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (Matt. 1:1), and when Jesus asked the Pharisees, "What do they think about the Christ? Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." (Matt. 22:42). The book of Ruth magnifies the wonder of God's ways, through the bloodline of a lowly Moabite woman named Ruth the Messiah came and through him thousands upon thousands both of Jews and Gentiles shall be saved.

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## OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

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The story of Ruth tells a beautiful story of a noble man taking a lowly Gentile woman for his wife in the small town of Bethlehem-Judah. It foreshadows a day when greater wonders than those recorded in the history of Ruth, will be surpassed by another lowly woman giving birth to child in a manger in the same small town of Bethlehem-Judah, who will draw wise men from the East, with treasures of gold, and frankincense and myrrh to his feet, and rise as Saviour, Master and King of the world, in whose name all nations will be blessed.

**Symbolism of Orpah (a Gentile woman):** she had great affection for Naomi, but her love was not strong enough for her to leave Moab, she returned to her idols and gods which she was raised to believe in and all that was familiar to her, rather than risk taking an unknown path. Symbolically, she is a good example of a person who after hearing the Good News of the Gospel, chooses to remain with what they have always known and that is familiar to them, many have affection for Christ, yet come short of salvation, because they have a greater love for other things.

**Symbolism of Ruth (a Gentile woman):** Ruth unlike Obed, was prepared to forsake all she had known and renounce the idols and gods of Moab that she had been raised to believe in and worship no other God but the God who Naomi worshipped, the God of Israel. She chose to follow the insecure path of Naomi an aged and poor widow in a land of strangers and enemies of her country and its gods. Ruth's mind was set, she was determined that:

- No arguments would ever shake her resolution to go with Naomi.
- No kindness from her own family, nor any promise of elevation or advancement among her people would dissuade her.
- No unkindness from Israel, nor the fear of poverty and disgrace among them would change her mind.

This inner determination manifests the eternal language of love, for the inmost longing of love is to give itself away to the person that is loved. Ruth can be taken as a good example of a person who after hearing the Good News of the Gospel, chooses to forsake all and follow Christ. Naomi could desire no more than the steadfast declaration Ruth made. Likewise, God desires no more than a sinner makes a steadfast decision to accept and follow His Son. Ruth's became the first-fruits of the Gentiles and foreshadows how faithful believing Gentiles were to be incorporated into the Commonwealth of Israel by the love and grace of a heavenly Redeemer who laid down his life for them. Being the lineal ancestor of Christ, Ruth, a lowly Gentile woman was instrumental in the happiness of thousands of Gentiles and Jews that will be born to God through faith in her descendant the Lord Jesus Christ.

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*As the founder of Bible House of Grace, I would like to thank the many Christian scholars, commentators and theologians who have gone before me, and the many today, who have freely made available their works to enhance the knowledge of the Bible to all people worldwide. It is only with the help of these faithful writers that much of Bible House of Grace exists as it does today.*

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