

Lesson 4: Ruth Chapter 4 The Marriage of Boaz and Ruth and Conclusion

In Chapter 3 we read that Naomi wanted to repay Ruth for her hard work, her loyalty and loving kindness. She intends to help find a husband for Ruth from among her husband's family. Naomi is told to anoint herself, bathe and dress in her best garments, leaving behind the garments of widowhood she may have been wearing. She is told to approach Boaz at night on the threshing room floor and uncover his feet. Her actions were in fact, an indication that she was ready for marriage. Boaz vows to first ask the closest family member of her deceased husband's family to see if he might be interested. If he is not, Boaz, a much older man, would indeed marry her himself. In this lesson we see how a *minyan*, (**a gathering of ten male elders**) is used both to witness and or judge important issues of law and religion within the Jewish community.

(A clue to understanding this lesson is found in the meaning of the word "redeem." To redeem something is to "gain or regain possession of (something) in exchange for payment." Also, if Ruth does have a son, the land being redeemed would be this son's inheritance, not that of the redeemer.)

1. Read Ruth 4:1-4 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.

- a. Where did Boaz meet his relative?
- b. Why did he meet him in at the town gate instead of privately?
- c. Why did Boaz summon the elders to hear this discussion?
- d. Read Leviticus 25:25 here:

Leviticus 25:25 When one of your kindred is reduced to poverty and has to sell some property, that person's closest relative, **who has the duty to redeem it**, shall come and redeem what the relative has sold.

With this law in mind, why did the relative of Naomi agree to be the redeemer?

2. Read Ruth 4:5-12 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.

- a. Boaz revealed other conditions associated with this redemption. What is it that the "redeemer" or kinsman would also be responsible for, besides the land?
- b. Why does the kinsman reject the opportunity to redeem the land?
- c. What is it that seals the agreement between Boaz and the kinsman?

d. Ruth is often referred to as Ruth the Moabite. Does this prevent the witnesses from accepting Ruth as one of their own?

e. The elders accept the redemption of the land by Boaz. What blessings do they offer for Boaz and Ruth?

f. Who is Perez? See footnotes and Genesis 38:24-30 below.

Genesis 38:24-30 About three months later, Judah was told, “Your daughter-in-law Tamar has acted like a harlot and now she is pregnant from her harlotry.” Judah said, “Bring her out; let her be burned.”²⁵ But as she was being brought out, she sent word to her father-in-law, “It is by the man to whom these things belong that I am pregnant.” Then she said, “See whose seal and cord and staff these are.”²⁶ Judah recognized them and said, “She is in the right rather than I, since I did not give her to my son Shelah.” He had no further sexual relations with her.

²⁷ When the time of her delivery came, there were twins in her womb. ²⁸ While she was giving birth, one put out his hand; and the midwife took and tied a crimson thread on his hand, noting, “This one came out first.” ²⁹ But as he withdrew his hand, his brother came out; and she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was called Perez. ³⁰ Afterward his brother, who had the crimson thread on his hand, came out; he was called Zerah.

3. Read Ruth 4:13-22 and footnotes. Share any helpful footnotes with your group.

a. Verses 13-17 tell the happy ending to the story.

How and why was *Naomi* blessed?

b. Reflection: How would the story have ended if Naomi and Ruth had not stuck together during their life challenges?

4. In lesson 1, *Chesed* or *Hesed*, is described as God’s merciful fidelity and loving kindness in keeping with the promises of the Covenant.

a. Where in the Book of Ruth do we see the “hand of God”?

b. Boaz is a model of Christ. His character and actions prefigure the actions of Christ.

a. What character traits of Boaz are “Christ-like.”

b. How does Boaz treat his rival, the one who had the right to act as redeemer of Naomi, Ruth, and the land in question?

c. Was Boaz *obligated* to be the redeemer?

5. Read again Ruth 4:18-21. A genealogy is presented here. What impact did the loving relationship of these two widows and their redeemer, Boaz have on the future of Israel?