

Ruth Chapter 4

The Kinsman Redeemer: Redemption Accomplished

Introduction

Ruth chapter 4 is the climax of this beautiful story—the moment when redemption is achieved, the bride is claimed, and the covenant is sealed. This chapter reveals the core of the gospel through the typology of the kinsman redeemer. Boaz, the wealthy landowner who has shown kindness to Ruth, now steps forward to redeem her and restore Elimelech's inheritance.

But there is a complication. A nearer kinsman has the first right of redemption. This nearer kinsman represents the law—it has a claim, but it cannot save. It can identify the problem but cannot provide the solution. The law says, "You must be redeemed," but it cannot redeem. Only Boaz, the true kinsman redeemer, can pay the price and take Ruth as his bride.

This chapter also covers the ancient sandal ceremony, a legal custom based on Deuteronomy 25 that symbolized sealing agreements and transferring rights. The act of removing and giving the sandal confirmed the transaction before witnesses, serving as a public declaration that redemption had occurred.

The story ends in marriage, fruitfulness, and a genealogy that directly links to King David and ultimately to Yehoshua the Messiah. Ruth, the Moabite widow who arrived as a foreigner with nothing, becomes David's great-grandmother and a symbolic part of Christ's lineage. This demonstrates the power of redemption.

Ruth 4:1-6 - The Nearer Kinsman Who Cannot Redeem

Now Boaz went up to the city gate and sat down there. Suddenly, the close relative whom Boaz had spoken about passed by. So Boaz said, 'Come over here, friend, and sit down.' The man moved aside and sat down. Boaz then took ten elders of the city and said, 'Sit here.' They sat down. Then he said to the close relative, 'Naomi, who has returned from the land of Moab, sold the piece of land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. I wanted to let you know, saying, Buy it back in the presence of the town's people and the elders of my people. If you want to redeem it, do so; but if not, tell me, so I know. There's no one else but you to redeem it, and I am next in line.' The man responded, 'I will redeem it.' Boaz then said, 'On the day you buy the land from Naomi,

you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the deceased, to carry on the name of the dead through his inheritance.' The close relative replied, 'I cannot do it, or I would risk damaging my own inheritance. You can redeem it for yourself.'

Why does the nearer kinsman refuse? Deuteronomy 25:5-6 provides the answer. The law of levirate marriage required that "the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother which is dead, that his name be not put out of Israel." This means the child born to Ruth would be legally Mahlon's heir, not the nearer kinsman's. The redeemed land would pass to Mahlon's line. The nearer kinsman would pay the price, marry the widow, and raise children—but those children would inherit in another man's name. His own sons, born to his first wife, would be displaced in the inheritance. He says, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance" (v. 6). This is the natural, legal reason for his refusal.

But this refusal also reveals the law's spiritual limits. The law can demand redemption. The law can require marriage to the widow. The law can identify the debt. But the law cannot willingly pay the price. The law cannot love. The law cannot give sacrificially. The law cannot redeem the dead and bring them back to life. The nearer kinsman is thinking of self-preservation—"I will lose my inheritance." But redemption requires self-sacrifice. Only Boaz, the true kinsman redeemer, is willing to pay the price, to take Ruth as his bride, to raise up seed in the name of the dead—not out of legal duty, but out of love and grace.

The number 10 appears 242 times in the Bible, and the designation "10th" is used 79 times. Ten is viewed as a complete and perfect number, composed of 4 (representing the physical creation) and 6 (symbolizing man). As such, the meaning of 10 is one of testimony, law, responsibility, and the completeness of order. These ten witnesses establish complete testimony before YAHWEH and before the people.

The Gate: The Place of Legal Transaction

Boaz went to the city gate. In ancient Israel, the city gate was where legal matters were settled, contracts were made, and disputes were resolved. It served as the court, town hall, and public square. The elders sat at the gate to hear cases and witness transactions. By going to the gate, Boaz was following the proper legal process. This is not a private deal; it is a public, lawful redemption.

He takes ten elders as witnesses. Ten signifies testimony and completeness in Scripture. This redemption will be witnessed, recorded, and confirmed.

The Nearer Kinsman: The Law That Cannot Save

There is a closer kinsman who has the first right of redemption. Boaz does not name him—he simply calls him "friend" (literally "so-and-so" in the Hebrew). This unnamed kinsman represents the law. The law has a claim. The law has rights. The law says, "You must be redeemed. You are under an obligation. You have a debt." But the law cannot redeem.

When Boaz offers the opportunity to redeem the land, the nearer kinsman says, "I will redeem it" (v. 4). He is willing to buy back the property. But then Boaz adds the condition: "On the day you buy the field from 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" (v. 5).

Suddenly, the nearer kinsman refuses. "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance" (v. 6). Why? Because redeeming Ruth involves marrying her, raising children in the name of the deceased, and sharing the inheritance with those children. It requires sacrifice. It means giving, not just taking. It signifies love, not merely law.

The law can impose. The law can accuse. The law can say, "You owe a debt." But the law cannot pay the debt. The law cannot love. The law cannot redeem. Romans 8:3: "For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh." The law is powerless to save. Only grace—only the true Kinsman Redeemer—can pay the price.

Ruth 4:7-12 - The Sandal Ceremony: The Covenant Sealed

This was the custom in earlier times in Israel for redeeming and exchanging to confirm anything: one man would remove his sandal and give it to another, and this served as a confirmation in Israel. So the close relative said to Boaz, 'Buy it for yourself.' Then he took off his sandal. Boaz said to the elders and all the people, 'You are witnesses today that I have bought everything that belonged to Elimelech, as well as all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon, from Naomi's hand. Additionally, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, as my wife, to continue the name of the dead through his inheritance, so that his name may not be cut off from among his fellow Israelites or from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.' The people at the gate and the elders agreed, saying, 'We are witnesses.'

The Sandal: A Sign of Transfer and Covenant

The act of removing and giving the sandal was an ancient custom in Israel used to seal legal transactions. Verse 7 explains: "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."

This custom is rooted in Deuteronomy 25:5-10, the law of levirate marriage. If a man died without children, his brother was to marry the widow and raise up children in the dead man's name. If the brother refused, the widow could bring him before the elders, remove his sandal, spit in his face, and declare: "So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house" (Deuteronomy 25:9). The removal of the sandal symbolized the forfeiture of rights and the public shame of refusing to redeem.

But in Ruth's case, the sandal is given willingly. The nearer kinsman removes his sandal and gives it to Boaz, saying, "Buy it for yourself" (v. 8). This is not shame—it is a transfer. The right of redemption, the authority to redeem, the claim on the inheritance—all of this is transferred from the law to grace, from the one who cannot redeem to the One who can.

The sandal itself is significant. In Scripture, the foot represents authority, possession, and dominion. Joshua 1:3: "Every place that the sole of your foot will tread upon I have given you." Psalm 8:6: "You have put all things under his feet." To remove the sandal is to relinquish authority. To give the sandal is to transfer that authority to another.

Boaz receives the sandal. He now has the legal right, the authority, and the obligation to redeem. And he does so publicly, before witnesses: "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's... Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess... I have acquired as my wife" (vv. 9-10).

Boaz Redeems: The Price is Paid

Boaz does not just redeem the land. He redeems Ruth. He uses the word "acquired" (Hebrew: qanah, which can mean to buy, to purchase, to redeem). He has paid the price. He has bought her out of her poverty, out of her widowhood, out of her foreignness. She is no longer a gleaner in the field. She is the bride of the kinsman redeemer.

This is the gospel. Yehoshua is our Kinsman Redeemer. He is related to us by His incarnation—He took on flesh and became one of us (Hebrews 2:14: "Inasmuch then as the children have partaken of flesh and blood, He Himself likewise shared in the same"). He has the right to redeem because He is our brother. And He is willing to redeem because He loves us.

He paid the price. "You were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold... but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot" (1 Peter 1:18-19). The law could not pay the price. Only Yehoshua could. And He did. Publicly. Before witnesses—the angels, the prophets, the apostles, the church. "It is finished" (John 19:30). The transaction is complete.

The Blessing of the Witnesses

The people and the elders respond with a blessing: "We are witnesses. YEHWEH 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. May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, because of the offspring which YAHWEH will give you from this young woman" (vv. 11-12).

This blessing is prophetic. They invoke Rachel and Leah, the mothers of the twelve tribes. They invoke Tamar, whose story in Genesis 38 also involves a kinsman redeemer (Judah) and a Gentile woman who becomes part of the lineage of Messiah. They bless Boaz with prosperity in Ephrathah (Bethlehem). And they declare: "May your house be like the house of Perez."

Perez is the ancestor of Boaz (v. 18). But more importantly, Perez is in the direct symbolic lineage of Yehoshua. Matthew 1:3 lists Perez in the genealogy of Christ. The blessing of the people is being fulfilled not just in Boaz and Ruth, but in the Messiah who will come from their line.

Ruth 4:13-17 - The Marriage and the Birth of Obed

"So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, YEHWEH gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be YEHWEH, who has not left you this day without a close relative; and may his name be famous in Israel! And may he be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, who is better to you than seven sons, has borne him.' Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him. Also, the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, 'There is a son born to Naomi.' And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David." (Ruth 4:13-17)

The Marriage: The Bride is Claimed

"So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife" (v. 13). The redemption is complete. The bride is claimed. The foreigner, the Moabite, the widow, the gleaner—she is now the wife of the wealthiest man in Bethlehem. She who had nothing now has everything. She who was outside the covenant is now inside. She who was a stranger is now family.

This is the story of the church. We were foreigners. We were outside the covenant. We were dead in trespasses and sins (Ephesians 2:1), but Christ redeemed us. He took us as His bride. Ephesians 5:25-27: "Christ loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish."

The Birth of Obed: Fruitfulness and Legacy

"YEHWEH gave her conception, and she bore a son" (v. 13). The barren becomes fruitful. The dead progeny line is revived. Ruth, who had been married for ten years 10 years without bearing children (Ruth 1:4-5), now conceives and bears a son to Boaz.

The significance of Ruth's ten-year barrenness is profound. The number 10 appears 242 times in the Bible, and "10th" is used 79 times. Ten is composed of 4 (physical creation) and 6 (man), representing testimony, law, responsibility, and the completeness of order. Ruth was married to Mahlon for ten years without bearing children (Ruth 1:4-5)—ten years under the law, ten years of barrenness, ten years without fruit. But now, under grace, with Boaz the kinsman redeemer, YAHWEH immediately gives her conception. The contrast is stark: the law brings barrenness; grace brings fruitfulness.

This child is a gift from YAHWEH. "YEHWEH gave her conception." This is not just biology—it is providence, it is promise, it is covenant. The child's name is Obed, which means "servant" or "worshiper." He will serve. He will worship. And through him, the line of David and the line of Messiah will come.

The women bless Naomi: "Blessed be YEHWEH, who has not left you this day without a close relative" (v. 14). They are speaking of Obed, the grandson. But they are also speaking of the Kinsman Redeemer who orchestrated all of this. YAHWEH has not left Naomi—or Israel—without a Redeemer.

The women declare that Ruth "is better to you than seven sons." Seven is the number of completeness and perfection. To say Ruth is better than seven sons is to say she is beyond complete—she is grace upon grace. The Gentile bride (Ruth) has brought life, restoration, and blessing to Israel (Naomi) in ways that even seven perfect sons could not.

This pattern continues through the Gentile gospel age, represented by the seven stars of Revelation 1:20—the messengers to the seven churches. During this time, Israel is blind in part (Romans 11:25), and the Gentiles are grafted in (Romans 11:17). The Gentile believers provoke Israel to jealousy (Romans 11:11).

But after the seventh star, the Gentile age comes to its conclusion. Revelation 10:6-7 declares: There should be delay no longer, but in the days of the sounding of the seventh angel, when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God shall be finished. The seventh star has died. The final messenger of the Gentile age has completed his work. But the mystery is not finished instantly—it shall be finished over time. The midnight cry of Matthew 25:6 comes on the scene: Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him! This final cry finishes what the seventh star began—revealing the mystery of the prophets.

Then, from Revelation 10:8 onward, the gospel transitions to the Jews. The voice from heaven commands: You must prophesy again about many peoples, nations, tongues, and kings (Revelation 10:11). The two witnesses appear in Revelation 11, prophesying for 1,260 days (3.5 years). The gospel, which went to the Gentiles for the fullness of the nations (Romans 11:25), now returns to Israel.

The ultimate fulfillment comes when the Lamb stands on Mount Zion with the 144,000 (Revelation 14:1)—the sealed servants of Israel who bear His name on their foreheads. The Gentile age (seven stars) was necessary and blessed, but the restoration of Israel will be life from the dead (Romans 11:15). The gospel returns to Israel through the two witnesses (Revelation 11) and the proclamation of the everlasting gospel (Revelation 14:6).

Naomi as the Holy Spirit: Nurse and Nourisher

Ruth 4:17 adds a profound layer to this typology: "And the women her neighbours gave it a name, saying, There is a son born to Naomi; and they called his name Obed: he is the father of Jesse, the father of David."

Though the text says "women" (plural), they act as a single prophetic voice—giving one name, making one declaration. This is similar to Anna the prophetess (Luke 2:36-38), who, though singular, represented the faithful remnant of Israel. The neighboring women, though plural, speak as one witness to the birth of the servant. This parallels the shepherds who announced Christ's birth (Luke 2:8-18) and the women who proclaimed His resurrection (Matthew 28:1-10, Mark 16:1, Luke 24:10). There are many witnesses but one testimony. This reflects the pattern of the church: many members, one body (1 Corinthians 12:12); many witnesses, one testimony (Hebrews 12:1). The

neighboring women become the prophetic chorus declaring: "There is a son born"—the Servant of YAHWEH who will bring redemption to Israel and all nations.

Notice the declaration: "There is a son born to Naomi." Though Obed is biologically Ruth's son, the women declare him Naomi's. This points to the mystery of the incarnation—the Son born to the Father, sent as a servant. Philippians 2:7: "But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men."

Obed means "servant" or "worshiper." He is the servant born to fulfill the covenant, restore the inheritance, bring forth the line of David, and ultimately usher in the Messiah. Just as Obed was born to Naomi (Israel) through Ruth (the Gentile bride), so Yehoshua, the only begotten Son, was sent to Israel, taking the form of a servant and made in the likeness of men. The pattern remains the same: servant → gift → beloved. Obed (servant) begets Jesse (gift), who begets David (beloved). Yehoshua is the Servant of YAHWEH (Isaiah 42:1), the Gift of grace (John 3:16), and the Beloved Son (Matthew 3:17).

Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her bosom, and became a nurse to him (v. 16). Throughout this study, Naomi has symbolized the Holy Spirit—the Comforter who guides Ruth (the Gentile church) to Boaz (the Kinsman Redeemer). Now, Naomi nurtures the child. She is the one who feeds, instructs, and raises up the next generation.

This is the work of the Holy Spirit. John 14:26: "But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you." The Spirit nurtures the fruit of redemption. The Spirit raises up the children of God. The Spirit brings the Word to full maturity.

Ruth 4:18-22 - The Genealogy: From Perez to David to Yehoshua

"Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David." (Ruth 4:18-22)

The Line of Messiah

The book of Ruth ends with a genealogy. This is not an afterthought—it is the point. The entire story has been leading to this. Ruth, the Moabite widow, has become part of King

David's line. And through David, she has become part of the line of Yehoshua the Messiah.

Matthew 1:5-6 records this same genealogy: "Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David the king." Notice that Matthew includes the names of the women—Rahab (a Canaanite prostitute) and Ruth (a Moabite widow). Both were Gentiles. Both were outsiders. Both were redeemed. Both became part of the line of Messiah.

This is the gospel. Yehoshua did not come only for the Jews. He came for the Gentiles. He came for the outsiders. He came for the foreigners. He came for Ruth. He came for us. Ephesians 2:11-13: "Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh... were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ."

From Perez to David: Ten Generations

The genealogy lists ten generations from Perez to David. Ten is the number of testimony and completeness. This is a complete testimony to YAHWEH's faithfulness. From Perez (born of Tamar, another Gentile woman in a kinsman-redeemer story) to David (the king after YAHWEH's own heart), the line is preserved, protected, and brought to fulfillment.

Obed (servant, worshiper) begot Jesse (meaning "gift" or "wealthy"). Jesse begot David (meaning "beloved"). The servant leads to the gift leads to the beloved. This is the pattern of redemption. We come as servants, broken and needy. We receive the gift of grace, undeserved and unearned. We become the beloved, the bride of Christ, cherished and redeemed.

David and Yehoshua: The Ultimate Kinsman Redeemer

David is the king of Israel, the man after YAHWEH's own heart (1 Samuel 13:14), the one to whom the covenant of an eternal throne was given (2 Samuel 7:12-16). But David is also a type of Christ. He is a shepherd king, a suffering servant, a victorious conqueror, a worshiper, a man of faith.

And from David comes Yehoshua. Matthew 1:1: "The book of the genealogy of Yehoshua the Messiah, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham." Luke 1:32: "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David."

The story of Ruth is the story of how a Gentile widow became part of the lineage of the King of Kings. It is the story of redemption, of grace, of covenant faithfulness. It is the story of how the Kinsman Redeemer paid the price, claimed the bride, and brought forth a seed that would bless all nations.

Summary: The Kinsman Redeemer and the Gospel

Ruth chapter 4 brings the story to its glorious conclusion. The nearer kinsman, representing the law, cannot redeem. The law can demand but cannot deliver. The law can accuse but cannot save. Only Boaz, the true Kinsman Redeemer, can pay the price.

The sandal ceremony, rooted in Deuteronomy 25, seals the covenant. The nearer kinsman removes his sandal and gives it to Boaz, transferring all rights and authority. The removal of the sandal symbolizes the relinquishing of dominion and the forfeiture of the right to redeem. Boaz receives the sandal and publicly declares before ten witnesses: "I have bought all that was Elimelech's... Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, I have acquired as my wife."

The redemption is complete. The bride is claimed. Ruth, who arrived as a foreigner with nothing, is now the wife of the wealthiest man in Bethlehem. The barren becomes fruitful. YAHWEH grants her conception, and she bears Obed. The women bless Naomi, declaring that Ruth "is better to you than seven sons." The Gentile bride has brought life, restoration, and blessing to Israel.

Naomi, representing the Holy Spirit, takes the child and nurses him. The Spirit nurtures the fruit of redemption, raises up the children of God, and brings the Word to maturity.

The genealogy reveals the ultimate purpose: Ruth is part of the line of David and the line of Yehoshua the Messiah. The Moabite widow, redeemed by grace, becomes the great-grandmother of the king and an ancestor of Christ Himself. This is the power of the gospel.

The typology is clear:

- Boaz = Yehoshua, the Kinsman Redeemer who paid the price with His own blood
- Ruth = The Gentile church, the bride who was far off but has been brought near
- The nearer kinsman = The law, which has a claim but cannot redeem
- The sandal ceremony = The transfer of authority from law to grace
- Naomi = The Holy Spirit, the Comforter who guides the bride and nurtures the fruit
- Obed = The fruit of redemption, the servant and worshiper

- David = The king in the line of Messiah
- Yehoshua = The ultimate fulfillment, the Son of David, the true Kinsman Redeemer

The story of Ruth is the story of the gospel. We were outsiders. We were foreigners. We were without hope. But the Kinsman Redeemer came. He paid the price. He claimed us as His bride. And now we are part of His family, part of His inheritance, part of His eternal kingdom.

As Ruth said to Naomi in chapter 1: "Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God" (Ruth 1:16). This is the cry of every redeemed soul. This is the testimony of the Gentile church. We have been grafted in (Romans 11:17). We have been brought near (Ephesians 2:13). We have been redeemed (1 Peter 1:18-19). And we are loved (1 John 3:1).

The book of Ruth ends with a genealogy that leads to David. But it does not stop there. The genealogy continues through the prophets, through the exile, through the return, through the silent years, until finally, in the fullness of time, the Kinsman Redeemer is born in Bethlehem, the house of bread, the city of David.

And His name is Yehoshua. Emmanuel. God with us. The Redeemer lives.

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