

Mining Biblical



Truth



Minding Biblical Truth



Ken Requard

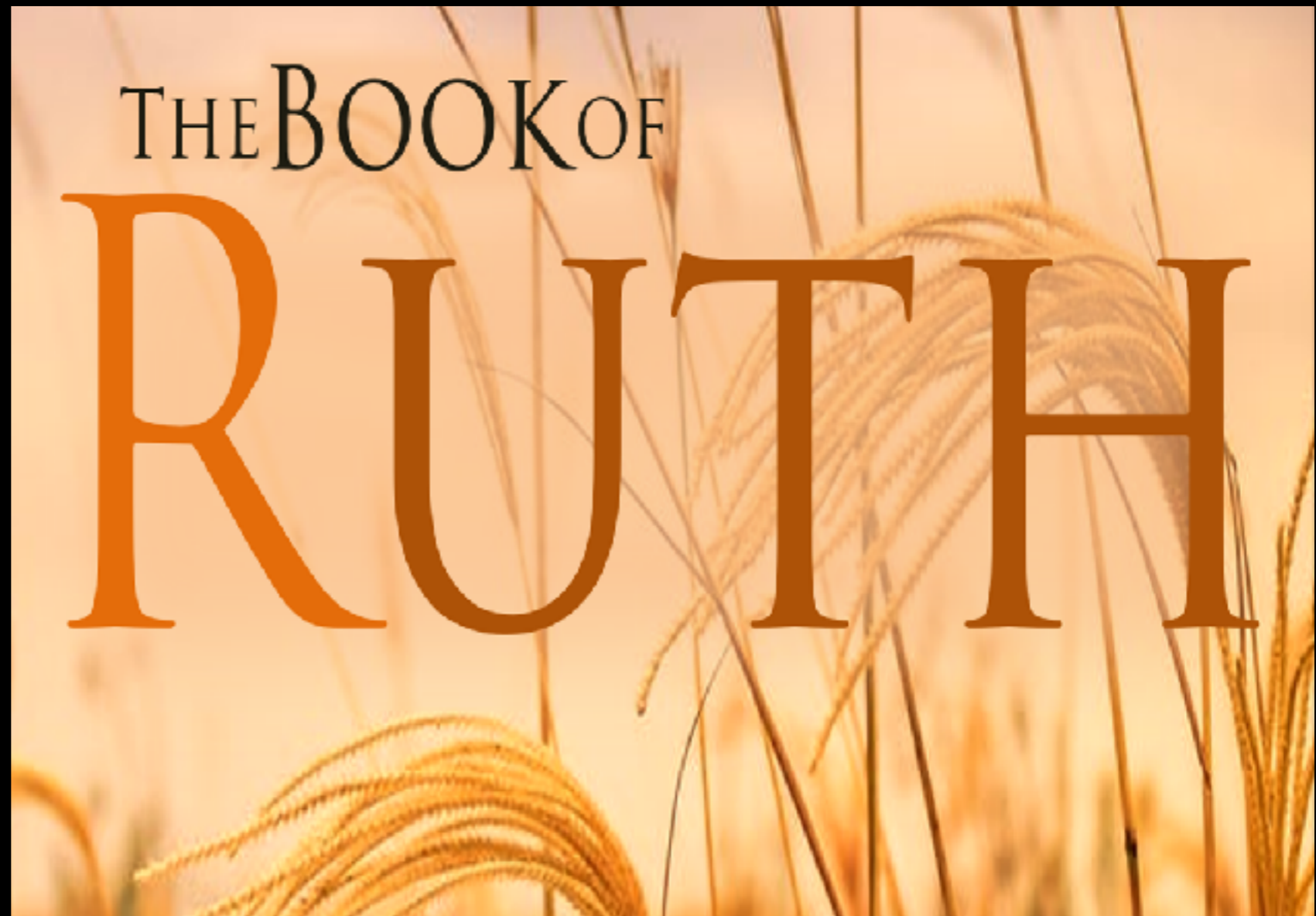
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Truth



*Faithfulness
and
Redemption*

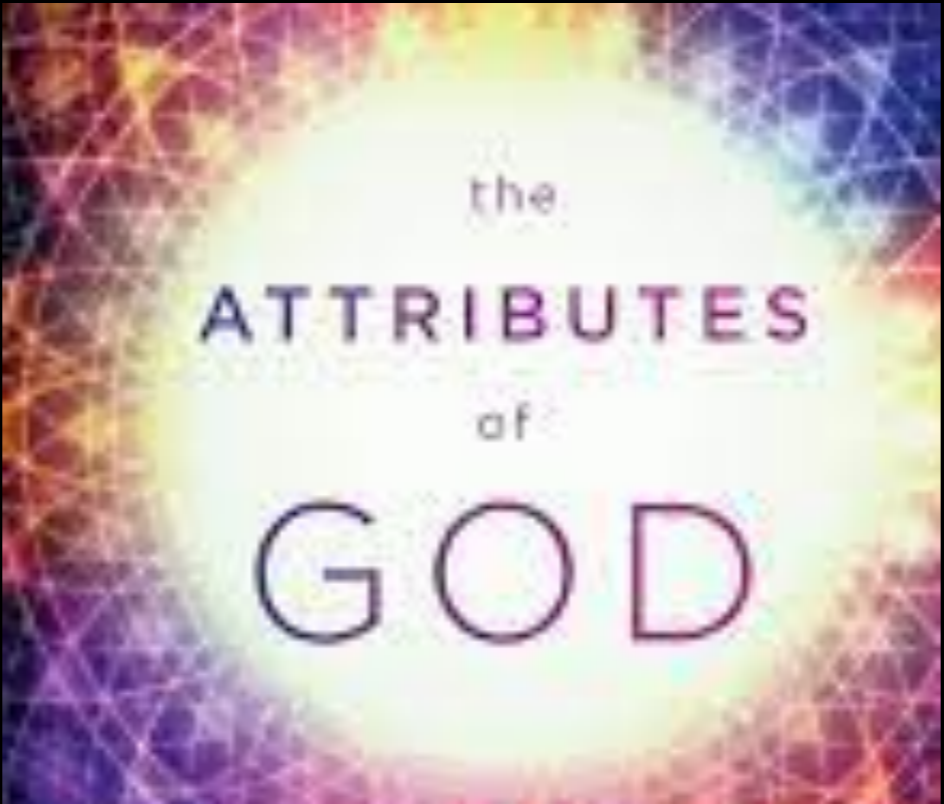




וְאֵלֶּיךָ אֵת יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ בְּכָל לֵבְךָ וּבְכָל נַפְשֶׁךָ
וּבְכָל מַדְרֵךְ וְהָיוּ הַדְּבָרִים הָאֵלֶּה אֲשֶׁר אָנֹכִי מַצְוֶה
הַיּוֹם עִם לִבְּךָ וְעִינֵיכֶם לְבַנּוֹת וּדְבַרְתֶּם בְּשִׁבְתְּךָ
בְּבֵיתְךָ וּנְתַתְּ בְּדַרְךָ וּבְשִׁכְבְּךָ וּבְקוּמְךָ וְקִשְׁרָתְךָ
לְאוֹת עֲלֵיךָ וְהָיוּ לְטֹטְפֹת בֵּין עֵינֶיךָ וּכְתֻבָתְךָ
עַל מוֹזְזוֹת בֵּין עַרְוֹת וּבְשִׁעְרֶיךָ וְהָיָה

Key Hebrew Words:

DABAQ GOEL HESSED

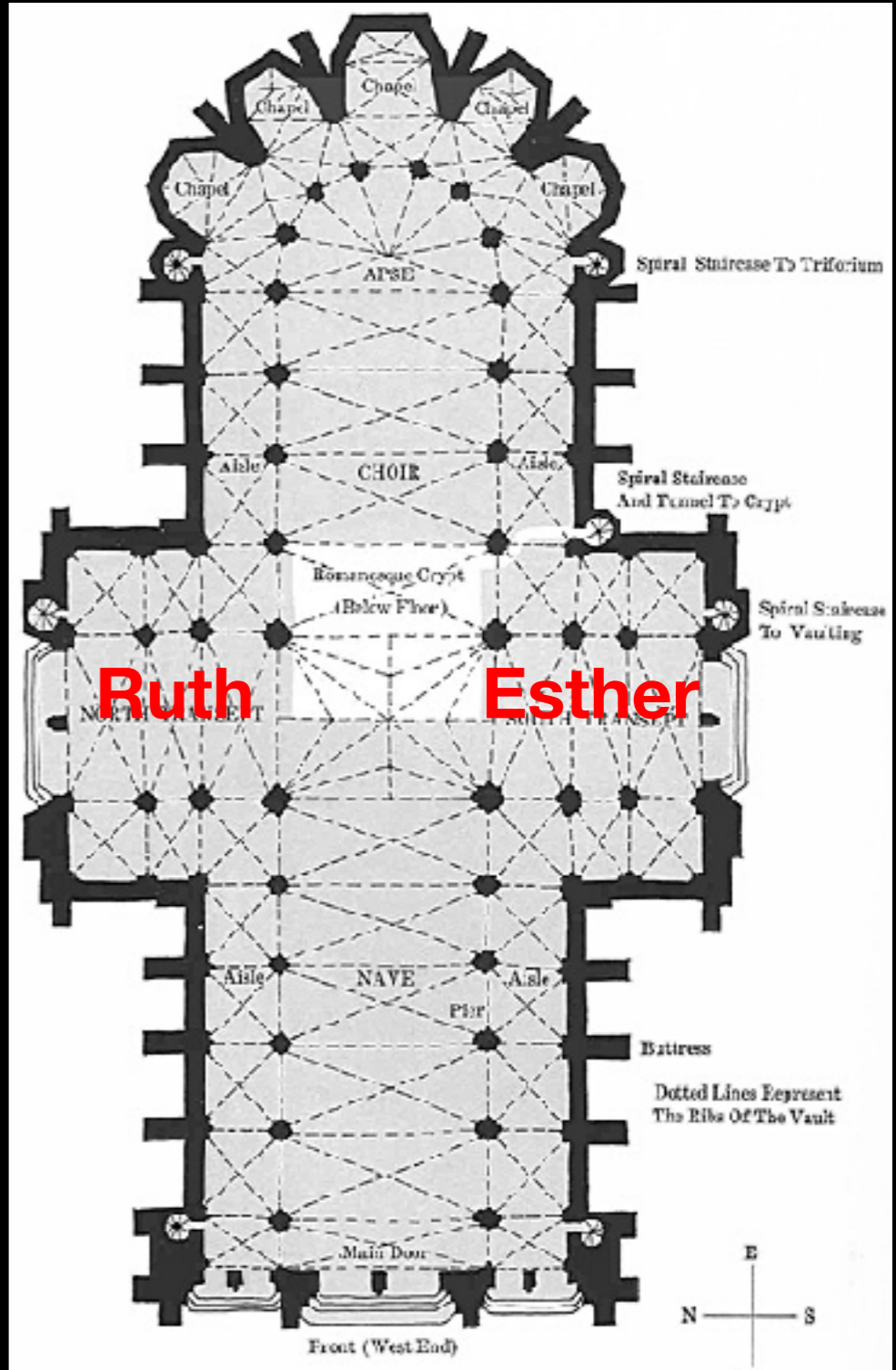


Invisible



AICM: Learn that God is faithful to redeem his people.

God's word has been recorded from many human perspectives. One of those is the feminine perspective, best displayed in the books of Ruth and Esther. Christopher Watkin compares God's word to a great cathedral where Ruth and Esther are like side chapels.



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In the darkness of the period of the Judges, the Book of Ruth sheds the light of God's faithfulness.





Chiasm

A. Introduction: devastation of Naomi's family 1:1-5.

- Family lost, Elimelech's line dies out.
- Ruth's tragic marriage to the son whose name means sick.
- Naomi loses two sons.

B. Two of Naomi's relatives debate whether to support her 1:6-19a.

- Both initially agree.
- One turns back when marriage mentioned.
- One chooses to stay with admirable speech.
- Blessing is uttered for Ruth.
- Decision to support Naomi implies no marriage for Ruth.

C. Return to Bethlehem in emptiness and hopelessness 1:19b-22.

- Identity question: Is this Naomi?
- Naomi left full, returns empty.

D. CENTER: Meeting of Ruth and Boaz 2:1-23.

C'. Ruth appeals to Boaz and returns in fullness and hope 3:1-18.

- Identity question: Who are you?
- Ruth left empty, returns full.

B'. Two of Naomi's relatives debate whether to support her 4:1-12.

- Both initially agree.
- One turns back when marriage mentioned.
- One chooses to help her with admirable speech.
- Blessing is uttered for Ruth.
- Decision to support Naomi results in marriage for Ruth.

A'. Conclusion: restoration of Naomi's family 4:13-21.

- Family restored, Elimelech's line resurrected.
- Ruth's blessed marriage to the man whose name means strength.
- Naomi promised many grandsons.



Ruth 1: Love's Resolve.

At the end of Judges, an unfaithful Levite living in sin takes a woman as a concubine from Bethlehem. She is raped and killed by the Benjamites. In a symbolic way, the coming of Ruth, a Gentile, to Bethlehem is a righteous replacement for the lost woman in Judges 19-21 and Boaz, a half-breed, is a righteous replacement for the man of Bethlehem who sold his daughter as a concubine.



Response to Famine

Although we don't know for certain, given the evil in Israel at the time, it seems likely that the famine was God-ordained punishment. The decision by Elimelech to leave is a refusal to suffer and to leave the land a refusal of the Lord's covenant. This is ironic because it contradicts his name which means "God (ELI) is my king (MELECH). He should have learned from the consequences of Abraham's flight to Egypt. Allowing his sons to marry Moabites was a violation of the law. Naomi appears to passively obey her husband but that was her duty under the law.



Naomi's influence on Ruth:



Ruth clings to Naomi. The Hebrew verb DABAQ means to "stick like glue."

Her statement in Hebrew is alliterative and rhythmic:

TELEKI ELEK (you go, I go)
TALINI ALIN (you live, I live)
AMMEK AMMI (your people, my people)
WELOHAYIK ELOHAY (your God, my God)

Ruth exhibits whole-hearted devotion to Naomi, giving her HESED (loving kindness) - one of the key themes of the book.



Why Does Ruth follow Proverbs in the order of the Hebrew Scriptures?

Proverbs ends (31:10-31) with a tribute to the righteous woman, the **ḤAYIL ISSA**.

Ruth illustrates a righteous woman.

English Bibles place Ruth according to logical chronology. The Jews position the book thematically.

Although Deuteronomy forbid the Moabite to join the congregation until the 10th generation, in one sense Ruth is no longer a Moabite. She has become a proselyte of Judaism.



Fullness to Emptiness? Pleasant to Bitter?

Naomi is not really empty: she has Ruth. Paradoxically, it is Ruth whom God uses to restore Naomi's faith. Ruth becomes the cure for emptiness and bitterness.

I don't think Naomi is blaming the Lord for her plight but does see Him punishing the family for Elimelech's actions. Unlike Job, she does not express any confusion about why she is suffering. But she does lack hope of restoration.

Jesus made himself empty so that we could be full. He endured bitterness.



Parallels to Judah/Tamar (GEN 38)

Like Elimelech, Judah leaves his family and sojourns with Canaanites, marrying one who dies. His first two sons die: both married to Tamar whom he considers cursed. Like Ruth, Tamar clings to her Hebrew family. Like Ruth, she proves to be more righteous than Judah. Both accounts involve Levirate marriage. Judah's second son dies because he refuses to "redeem" his brother's line by having a son by Tamar. He stands in contrast to Boaz.

Tamar and Ruth are both in the genealogy of David and Jesus. In accordance with the prohibition against foreigners in the congregation in Deuteronomy, the first king from the line of Judah (David) comes 10 generations after Tamar/Judah.



Principle from Ruth 1:
Even in the darkest times, God is working to restore light to those who cling to him.

Application:

When have you failed to endure punishment for sin like Elimelech?

When have you allowed bitterness to threaten your faith?



Ruth 2-3: Love's Request and Response:

Boaz, a type of Christ: He shows loving kindness (ḤESED) to his workers and especially to Ruth noticing her kindness to Naomi.

Ruth literally responds: You have noticed the unnoticed. This is what Jesus did.

Throughout scripture, God shows his ḤESED for widows, foreigners (sojourners), and orphans. Naomi and Ruth meet 2 of those 3 categories.

Boaz fits the 10th generation pattern:

Noah - 10th from Adam; Abraham - 10th from Noah; Boaz - 10th from Isaac.



Why was Boaz not yet married?

We are not given his age but he praises Ruth for not seeking a young man implying that he is middle-aged.

He would also have needed time to become as prosperous as he was. Perhaps he was shunned because of his connection to Rahab?

The fact that he does not become a husband until God draws his bride to him points to Christ, the bridegroom, waiting for his bride, the Church.



Why does Naomi tell Ruth to change her clothes before submitting herself to Boaz?

She likely was dressing like a widow in mourning. By removing her widow's clothes, she signals her availability for marriage. This makes more sense that wearing something fancy which would imply that she was appealing to Boaz' sexual desires.

Why is Boaz willing to marry a Moabitess?

His grandmother Rahab was a Gentile.



Parallels to Lot:

Lot's daughters-in-law lose their husbands like Ruth and Orpah. Ruth's uncovering of Boaz' feet is like Lot's daughters-in-law uncover him but unlike them, Ruth is righteous. She does not get Boaz drunk and take advantage. The other connection is that Ruth is a descendant of Lot.



Boaz:

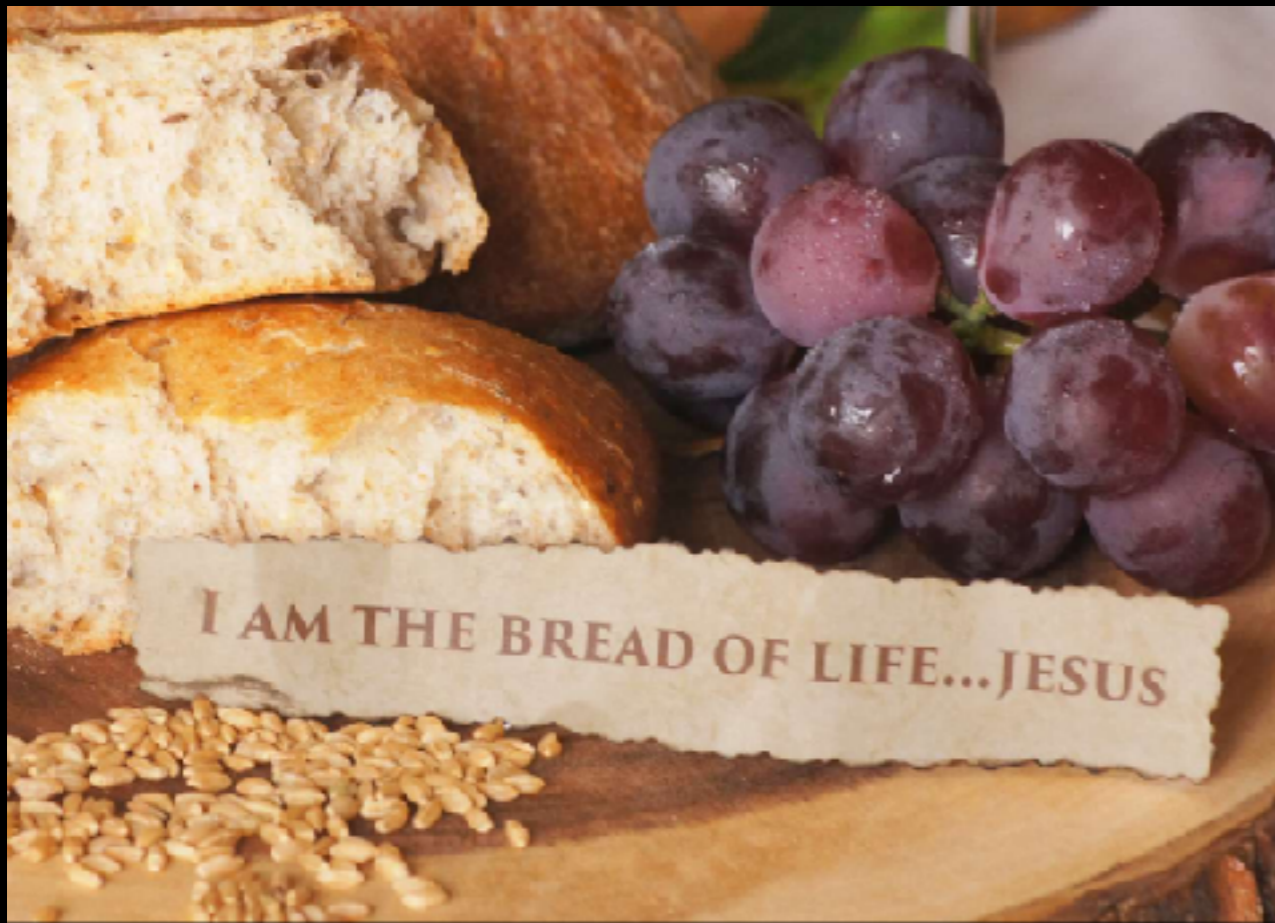


He must have already been thinking about marrying Ruth to redeem Elimelech's inheritance because he knows that another man has first dibs. Like Christ, Boaz is willing to risk criticism to redeem, to be the GO-EL, the kinsman redeemer. The related word to GO-EL is GO-AL, the kinsman avenger. Since Hebrew has only consonants, the change is in the implied vowel. Jesus came the first time as the GO-EL but will return as the GO-AL.



Boaz as type of Christ:

Boaz gives Ruth grain (I am the bread of life), and water (I am the living water.)"



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Principle: God's loving kindness redeems his chosen.



**Redemption
always comes
with a cost.**

What would it feel like to be redeemed - to be brought back to God by God?

Who can you redeem today by showing them loving kindness?



Ruth 4: Love's Reward.

Boaz expertly sets up his fellow kinsman who has priority to be the redeemer of Naomi. He entices him with the land and then reveals that since Naomi is too old to conceive, he would have to marry Ruth. He presumably is already married with sons and does not want a son by Ruth to potentially compete with his sons over inheritance.

The reference for taking off his shoe is Deut. 25:9. If he had not taken it off himself, Naomi would be authorized by the law to remove his sandal and spit in his face in the presence of the leaders at the gate... public humiliation. The spit was symbolic of his seed, his semen, which would be returned to him - void.



Boaz: Type of Christ, as Kinsman Redeemer.

The redeemer had to be:

Related: Christ had to be fully human.

Able: Only Christ as the perfect man could redeem all mankind from sin.

Willing: Only God himself was capable of this act of sacrificial love.

Other Types:

Ruth is thought by many to be a type of the church because she is a Gentile who in faith comes to Christ.

Naomi is a type of the dispersed Jews, some of whom are brought to Christ by Gentile believers.



Boaz also acts as an intercessor for Naomi/Ruth as Christ acts as an intercessor for us.



Consequently, he is able to save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for them.

Hebrews 7:25



The Blessings

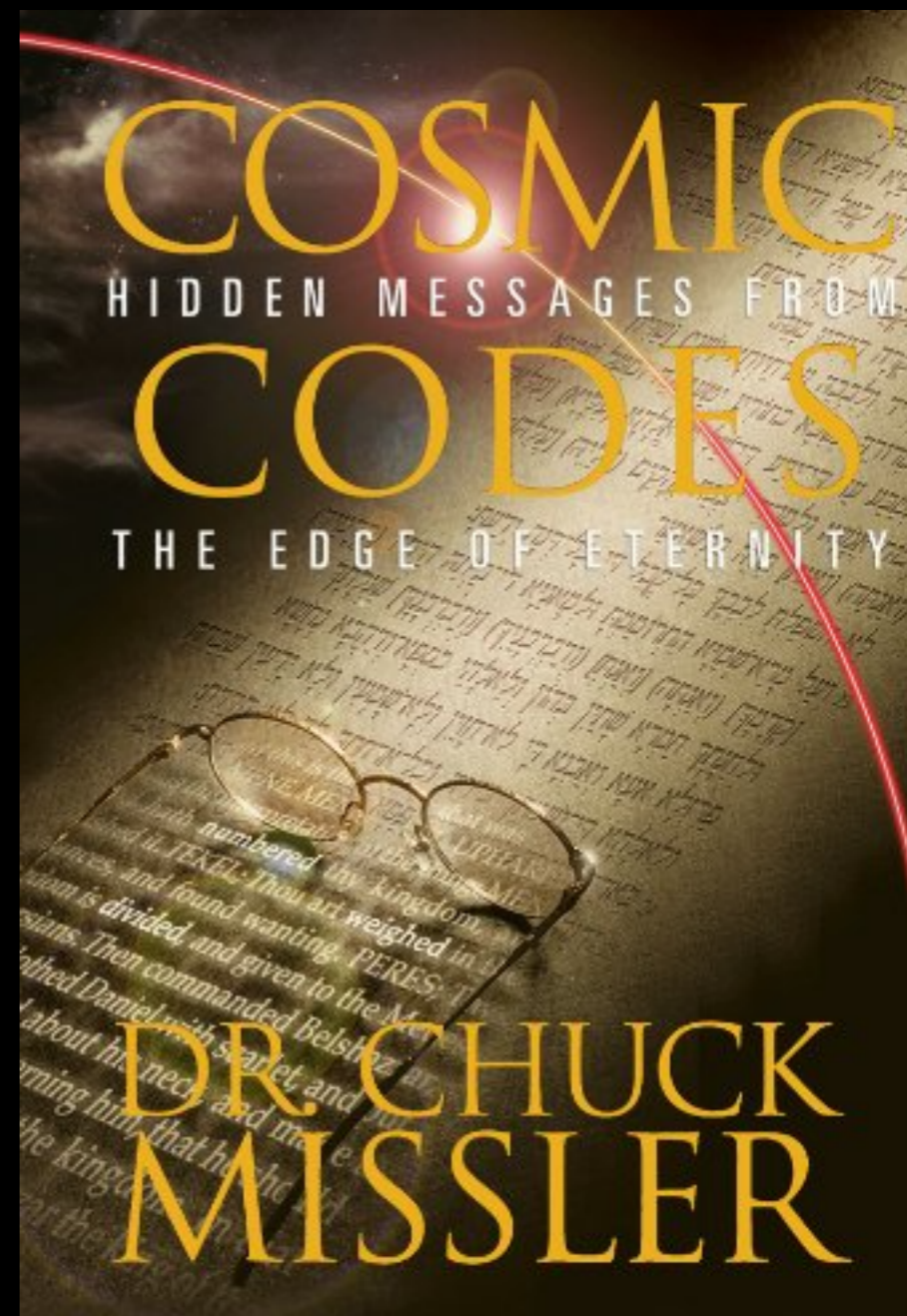
The women bless Naomi/Ruth to be like Rachel, Leah, and Tamar. Rachel and Leah were the mothers of 8 of the 12 tribes. We saw earlier the connection to Tamar. Like Ruth, a Gentile, Tamar is honored as the mother of Boaz.



Secret Codes:

Some people believe that there are secret messages encoded in the Bible, some of which are based on intervals of numbers. Letters appearing at X intervals are found to spell hidden words.

5 names appear at 49 (7×7) letter intervals in Genesis 38 (Judah and Tamar): in this order: Boaz - Ruth - Obed - Jesse - David.





May He be Famous throughout Israel.

The Temple Pillars: Solomon's temple had two decorative (not functional) pillars. These were named Jachin and Boaz. Jachin means "YHWH establishes" and Boaz means "strength." Together: YHWH establishes strength.

Throughout Ruth, we see God working behind the scenes. He is **invisible** in that he does not speak directly or through a prophet.



Were Boaz and Ruth the Dream Couple?

Ruth is not described as beautiful.
Boaz is not described as handsome.
They are not socially or culturally equal.

What did they have in common?
Both were praised for their character.
Both loved God and saw God working in their relationship - they let God be their matchmaker.

If you are single, how willing are you to let God be your matchmaker or submit to God's will regarding your singleness?



Principle: Christ humbled himself as a man in order to be our kinsman-redeemer.

Christ was willing to lower himself from heaven to earth, from divine to human, sacrificing himself to redeem us from sin.

Will you personally accept his sacrifice and abide with him? Will you allow yourself to be redeemed?



Ruth and Boaz find rest by letting God guide their relationship. They don't seek to make their own "story." Unlike the movie character Jerry McGuire, Boaz does not think that Ruth "completes" him nor vice versa. They submit to God and allow him to use them in HIS STORY.

To what extent are you living "your story" and expecting God to validate it?
How are you seeking to redeem yourself without God?



Key Hebrew Words:
DABAQ GOEL HESED

May we stick like glue (DABAQ) to our redeemer (GOEL)
abiding in his loving kindness (HESED).



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