

# Ruth 4

New Living Translation Charles Dailey © 2017  
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## Introduction:

1. The key characters in chapters one and two are *Naomi* who moved to the land of Moab and *Ruth*, her daughter-in-law who returned to Bethlehem with Naomi.
2. Naomi is convinced that the Lord is punishing her for moving because of the death of her husband and two sons. However, she still serves the Lord and is training Ruth to worship and obey God, too.
3. The time was when the Judges ruled Israel.
4. While the *book* is not mentioned directly in the New Testament, the *person* of Ruth is, indicating that the story has a place in the canon of Scripture.
5. The two widows, Naomi and Ruth, are taking advantage of the provision in the Law of Moses that allows the poor to pick up grain in the fields that is left by the reapers as they gather the crop.
6. Ruth has “happened” to select the field of wealthy Boaz to glean. Boaz has noticed her and smoothed the way for her to take home a large quantity of grain.
7. Ruth shared this with her mother-in-law and Naomi has urged her to remain in the same field for the duration of the harvest.
8. There were little hints of a romance developing between Boaz and Ruth.

9. **David Guzik** speaks of the original allotment of the “Promised Land:”

When Israel came into the Promised Land during the days of Joshua, the land was divided among the tribes and then among the family groups. God intended that the land stay within those tribes and family groups, so the land could never permanently be sold. Every fifty years, it had be returned to the original family group.

**"In addition, you must count off seven Sabbath years, seven sets of seven years, adding up to forty-nine years in all. (9) Then on the Day of Atonement in the fiftieth year, blow the ram's horn loud and long throughout the land. (10) Set this year apart as holy, a time to proclaim freedom throughout the land for all who live there. It will be a jubilee year for you, when each of you may return to the land that belonged to your ancestors and return to your own clan. (11) This fiftieth year will be a jubilee for you. During that year you must not plant your fields or store away any of the crops that grow on their own, and don't gather the grapes from your unpruned vines. (12) It will be a jubilee year for you, and you must keep it holy. But you may eat whatever the land produces on its own. (13) In the Year of Jubilee each of you may return to the land that belonged to your ancestors. (14) "When you make an agreement with your neighbor to buy or sell property, you must not take advantage of each other. (15) When you buy land from your neighbor, the price you pay must be based on the**

number of years since the last jubilee. The seller must set the price by taking into account the number of years remaining until the next Year of Jubilee. (16) The more years until the next jubilee, the higher the price; the fewer years, the lower the price. After all, the person selling the land is actually selling you a certain number of harvests. (17) Show your fear of God by not taking advantage of each other. I am the LORD your God. (18) "If you want to live securely in the land, follow My decrees and obey My regulations."

Leviticus 25:8-18

### BUSINESS WHERE IT'S COOL

**(4:1) Boaz went to the town gate and took a seat there. Just then the family redeemer he had mentioned came by, so Boaz called out to him, "Come over here and sit down, friend. I want to talk to you." So they sat down together.**

- **The gates** of a walled city is where legal and official business was transacted, like a courtroom. The temperature was cooler there because of the masonry walls as well as being a very public place with travelers and citizens coming and going.
- **Boaz** didn't wait long until the closer kinsmen-redeemer came by and **Boaz** asked him to sit down.

**(2) Then Boaz called ten leaders from the town and asked them to sit as witnesses.**

- These **leaders** were recognized community authorities with the power to decide cases.

(3) And Boaz said to the family redeemer, "You know Naomi, who came back from Moab. She is selling the land that belonged to our relative Elimelech. (4) I thought I should speak to you about it so that you can redeem it if you wish. If you want the land, then buy it here in the presence of these witnesses. But if you don't want it, let me know right away, because I am next in line to redeem it after you." The man replied, "All right, I'll redeem it."

- **Boaz** explained why the **land** is for sale to a **redeemer**. **Naomi** has returned from **Moab** and wants to sell the property.
- **Boaz** explains that because Mr. So-and-So is the nearest qualifying **redeemer**, he has the first right of refusal to **redeem** the land through purchase; but **Boaz** also makes it clear that if he doesn't wish to **redeem** the land that **Boaz** will assume that duty.
- **Tom Bradford** gives the legal background:

First notice in verse 3 that the person who is the central figure in this negotiation is Na'omi, not Ruth, and this is because Na'omi is the widow of Elimelech. Elimelech was the owner of the piece of land in question and thus Na'omi, the only survivor, now represents Elimelech's clan and family.

However there is a problem: does Na'omi REALLY own the land since her husband and both of her sons (who would have been the legal

heirs of Elimelech's real property) died? The short answer must be "no" because there is no provision in Torah law for a widow to inherit land from her deceased husband.

Notice I didn't say that there was no provision for a female to ever inherit land, because indeed the daughters of Zelophehad pled their case to Moses (because Zelophehad had no sons, only daughters) and Moses decided (as God's earthly Mediator) that daughters could inherit their father's real property. But such is NOT the case with Na'omi; the land in question belonged not to her father but to her husband. So the land was not Na'omi's to hold; saying it was Na'omi's land was merely a figure of speech and a simple common way of identifying the parcel.

### A CRUCIAL DETAIL

**(5) Then Boaz told him, "Of course, your purchase of the land from Naomi also requires that you marry Ruth, the Moabite widow. That way she can have children who will carry on her husband's name and keep the land in the family."**

- One more detail. You also acquire **Ruth the Moabite widow** for the purpose of having a **child** by her so the that **child** can inherit the land.
- Evidently the redeemer could use the land to grow crops, but the title remained in the original family's

name. So he would have to pay out for land that would not become part of his own estate.

**(6) "Then I can't redeem it," the family redeemer replied, "because this might endanger my own estate. You redeem the land; I cannot do it."**

- The closest **redeemer** didn't want the land that included Ruth. So Boaz was next in line. He was willing to perpetuate the name of Chilion (also spelled Kilion).
- The closest **redeemer** was apt to have been a married man. How would he explain this to his wife?

**(7) Now in those days it was the custom in Israel for anyone transferring a right of purchase to remove his sandal and hand it to the other party. This publicly validated the transaction.**

- While there were written documents, the seal of the transaction was to take off a sandal and give it to the **other party**. This would impress the memory. No forgetting that they had to walk home without a sandal—or go to a shop to buy another pair.

### **BAREFOOT**

**(8) So the other family redeemer drew off his sandal as he said to Boaz, "You buy the land."**

- The transaction was complete. **Boaz** was a man of wealth and purchased the **land**.

**(9) Then Boaz said to the elders and to the crowd standing around, "You are witnesses that today I have bought from Naomi all the property of Elimelech, Kilion, and Mahlon.**

- Beyond the sandal surrender, the **elders** would each be able to attest to the transaction.
- The sale was between **Naomi** and **Boaz** and covered the **property** that had belonged to **Elimelech**, the father, and the sons **Kilion** and **Mahlon**.

**(10) And with the land I have acquired Ruth, the Moabite widow of Mahlon, to be my wife. This way she can have a son to carry on the family name of her dead husband and to inherit the family property here in his hometown. You are all witnesses today."**

- The natural step was to marry **Ruth**, giving her deceased **Mahlon** an heir to inherit the land Boaz had just purchased.
- This was a win-win outcome. Now the **widow Ruth** has a **husband** to care for her, and by custom, her mother-in-law Naomi would be lovingly cared for by Boaz and **Ruth**. The marriage of **Ruth** to Boaz solves all the problems that the story of Ruth presents!

### **DEMOCRACY AT WORK**

**(11) Then the elders and all the people standing in the gate replied, "We are witnesses! May the LORD make this woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, from whom all the nation of Israel**

descended! May you prosper in Ephrathah and be famous in Bethlehem. (12) And may the LORD give you descendants by this young woman who will be like those of our ancestor Perez, the son of Tamar and Judah."

- The entire community agreed. Then after the **elders** publicly notarize the agreement, they pronounced a prayer and a blessing over Boaz and Ruth asking that God would make them very fruitful (in children and descendants) **like Leah** and **Rachael** did for Jacob. It is an interesting choice of women's names to invoke because **Rachael and Leah** had something in common with Ruth: *they were all gentiles before their Hebrew husbands married them.* **Tamar** was also a gentile woman just like Ruth.

**(13) So Boaz took Ruth into his home, and she became his wife. When he slept with her, the LORD enabled her to become pregnant, and she gave birth to a son.**

- **Ruth** had not borne children when previously married, but now she has a **son** with **Boaz**. The text shows the direct intervention of the **Lord**. Part of that intervention was having the firstborn be **a son**.
- Some have labeled this story the Widow's Might.

### THE WOMEN APPROVED

**(14) Then the women of the town said to Naomi, "Praise the LORD, who has now provided a redeemer for your family! May this child be famous in Israel. (15)**



**May he restore your youth and care for you in your old age. For he is the son of your daughter-in-law who loves you and has been better to you than seven sons!"**

- **The women** of Bethlehem pronounced a **blessing** on **Naomi** after Ruth gave birth to a son. **Naomi** also had a **redeemer** in the grandchild that had been born.
- These women sensed that there was something more here than a wedding and a baby. **May this child be famous in Israel!**



While they could not see ahead, they could tell that this child would not be like every other baby in town. He had a special future. Jesus, the Redeemer of the whole world descended from this child.

- And in the short term, he would give a new reason for living to **Naomi**.
- The love of Ruth for **Naomi** had become the talk of town. It was greater than the **love of seven sons**.

**(16) Naomi took the baby and cuddled him to her breast. And she cared for him as if he were her own. (17) The neighbor women said, "Now at last Naomi has a son again!" And they named him**

**Ruth is the great-grandmother of King David; She is one of 4 women listed by Matthew in the genealogy of Jesus Christ: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth, Bathsheba**

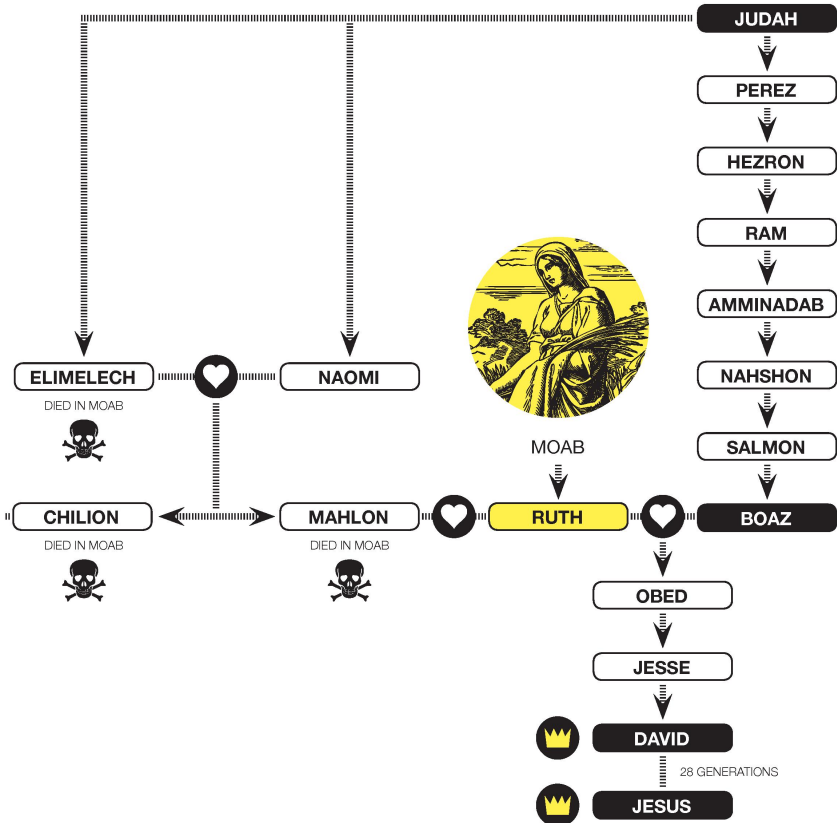
**Obed. He became the father of Jesse and the grandfather of David.**

- The **neighborhood women** even **named** the **son**, calling him **Obed** which means *worshiper* or the *servant*. Note that Ruth had been married before and had not conceived. Now she conceived quickly and it was a **son**.
- **Obed** was a redeemer for **Naomi** (verse 14). Later from this village came Obed's grandson **David** who ruled Israel. Finally, 1,000 years later came Jesus, the redeemer of the whole world.
- The book of Ruth was written in the days of David who became prophet and King.

### THE GENEALOGY

**(18) This is the genealogical record of their ancestor Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron. (19) Hezron was the father of Ram. Ram was the father of Amminadab. (20) Amminadab was the father of Nahshon. Nahshon was the father of Salmon. (21) Salmon was the father of Boaz. Boaz was the father of Obed. (22) Obed was the father of Jesse. Jesse was the father of David.**

- This **genealogy** is best visualized by the chart on page 11.



Following the years of King David, his son Solomon built the Temple in Jerusalem to replace the portable tabernacle built during the leadership days of Moses. The Temple had two pillars in front and one was named Boaz. It had to refer to the hero of the Ruth story because there is no other Boaz in Scripture. Boaz stood out above other men of Israel.

**Hiram set the pillars at the entrance of the Temple, one toward the south and one toward the north. He named the one on the south Jakin, and the one on the north Boaz.** 1 Kings 7:21



- The book of Ruth is different from the other books in the Bible. There are no miracles. No special effects. No signs and wonders. No prophets. ***But redeeming love makes the story.***