



▶ *Redemption* ◀

BOAZ PLAYED THE ROLE OF KINSMAN-REDEEMER BY MARRYING RUTH, POINTING TO JESUS AS THE ULTIMATE REDEEMER.

RUTH 3:8-13; 4:13-17

Nobody likes feeling helpless and insecure during crises. People often struggle to ask for help. Some isolate and withdraw from others, making things worse. Crises challenge our faith to the point that we may wonder if God is in control or cares about our situation. Social media allows people to put on their best face, hide, and pretend they have it all together. Down deep, everyone knows they need something more than what society offers. God has answered the world’s cry with an ultimate solution.

 **What has provided you a sense of hope when everything seemed out of control?**

UNDERSTAND **THE CONTEXT**

RUTH 3:1-4:22

Ruth's story demonstrates the magnitude of God's providential care for all people. From an uncertain future to a future secured by the redeeming grace of God, Ruth's story reminds the reader that God's promises and love are immeasurable. The story of Ruth demonstrates God's grace and reveals His glory, foreshadowing His redemptive plan through Jesus.

Simply trying to survive, Ruth went to the fields of one of their family's close relatives. While there, she met Boaz, "a prominent man of noble character" (2:1). Immediately, Boaz was attracted to Ruth's integrity (2:11-12), and he invited her to glean from the best parts of his field under his protection. Naomi knew this budding relationship could be a chance for their family redeemer to take notice of their plight. Boaz recognized Ruth's character and promised that if the nearest kinsman would not redeem her, he would. Boaz fulfilled his promise when the nearest family redeemer refused, thus offering the opportunity to Boaz. Boaz and Ruth married. From their union, Obed was born. Obed was the father of Jesse, who was the father of Israel's most renowned king, David.

Naomi and Ruth needed security for their futures and to trust in God for their fears. According to Old Testament law, a family's real estate was inalienable (1 Kings 21:3). Due to Naomi's poverty, the land would be sold. However, the family could redeem it through a kinsman who would purchase the land, and it would not be lost. When this occurred through Boaz's fulfilled promise, all the problems in chapter one were resolved. God specializes in resolving life's most significant problems. God sent humanity's Redeemer, Jesus Christ, years later to another young family in the lineage of King David. When Jesus died for the world's sins, He redeemed all that people had lost from the original fall (Gen. 3). The Lord secured humanity's eternity so that all who believe in Him might be saved under the shelter of His wings. Jesus is our Kinsman-Redeemer.



As you read Ruth 3:8-13; 4:13-17, take notice of how God worked through Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz to unfold His sovereign plan.

EXPLORE **THE TEXT**

FUTURE UNCLEAR (RUTH 3:8-10)

⁸ At midnight, Boaz was startled, turned over, and there lying at his feet was a woman! ⁹ So he asked, “Who are you?” “I am Ruth, your servant,” she replied. “Take me under your wing, for you are a family redeemer.” ¹⁰ Then he said, “May the LORD bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor.”

VERSE 8

Once Naomi learned that Ruth had been gleaning in the fields of **Boaz**, she initiated a plan that would give the most advantageous route to Boaz claiming the right of kinsman-redeemer. She told her daughter-in-law to prepare herself as a bride would do before her wedding night. Naomi’s urgency had to do with her concern for Ruth’s future security. How could Ruth truly know rest and security without a husband? Therefore, Naomi decided to take advantage of their present circumstances and see if God’s provision of food extended to the provision of a husband for Ruth.

The scenario leading to Boaz’s discovery of Ruth at his feet has given rise to various interpretations. We must reject any interpretation that suggests that Naomi wanted Ruth to act seductively. There are many reasons why this viewpoint must be rejected. First, Naomi was viewed by the people in Bethlehem as an honorable woman. She would not have encouraged Ruth to act dishonorably or shamefully. Second, Ruth’s clothing was not indicative of a prostitute’s dress. Common outer garments were used as blankets, but Ruth’s outer garment was ornamental since Naomi told her to “wear your best clothes” (v. 3). Third, Ruth laid at Boaz’s feet but did not act aggressively toward him. Fourth, Boaz’s response to Ruth showed his integrity by not taking advantage of Ruth at the moment. Rather, he complimented her kindness demonstrated in her purity, and he showed appreciation for her nobility, which was known throughout the town.

No matter how unusual the circumstances, when a person honors God and pursues godly character, others recognize their actions. Naomi, Boaz, and Ruth acted with integrity and grace as this scene unfolded.

VERSE 9

Ruth humbled herself but boldly requested Boaz to take her under his wing as their family redeemer. Being a Moabite widow, Ruth was not bound by Jewish laws. Still, she decided to follow the Lord in response to Naomi's faith (1:16). Naomi had explained the levirate law, which stated that when a husband died without children, the nearest brother-in-law (*levir*) might be asked to marry his brother's widow to give her security in the name of the deceased brother.

Ruth did not have a brother-in-law, since both sons of Elimelech were dead. Therefore, she asked Boaz to take her under his wing and serve as the redeemer. Ruth's expression, ***Take me under your wing***, was a beautiful way to express a redeemer's action. Psalm 91:4 says, "He will cover you with his feathers; you will take refuge under his wings. His faithfulness will be a protective shield."

In a world filled with danger, uncertainty, and insecurity, the Lord offers refuge under His wings to all who trust Him. The expression of being under His wing is highly descriptive. If parents will do anything to protect and care for their children, think of God's infinite love for all who take refuge in Him.

***The Lord offers refuge under His wings
to all who trust Him.***

VERSE 10

With the most tender response, Boaz called Ruth ***my daughter***. Boaz was several years older than Ruth. This fact became evident when Boaz mentioned Ruth not pursuing ***younger men***. His reference could have been to other men of means.

Ruth's request for Boaz to pursue the role of family redeemer did not go unheard or ignored. Boaz understood the situation well and expressed his delight in Ruth's trusting him to be her husband. The circumstance is certainly untraditional and unconventional for modern readers, but the unfolding story of God's redemption shows how God's ways are not ours (Isa. 55:8).

The way the Lord works might seem mysterious, but when God's people walk in integrity, focused on bringing God glory, His plans unfold beautifully. Naomi sent Ruth to the threshing floor in hope that God would provide. Ruth went to the threshing floor in faith, not knowing how God would work. Boaz responded in love to the inward beauty of Ruth's character.



How has God's guidance through moments of uncertainty influenced your faith?

FUTURE SECURED (RUTH 3:11-13)

¹¹ “Now don’t be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say, since all the people in my town know that you are a woman of noble character. ¹² Yes, it is true that I am a family redeemer, but there is a redeemer closer than I am. ¹³ Stay here tonight, and in the morning, if he wants to redeem you, that’s good. Let him redeem you. But if he doesn’t want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, I will. Now lie down until morning.”

VERSES 11-13

Boaz assured Ruth of his willingness to help her. He commended her for her noble character, which all the people in Bethlehem had witnessed. Ruth’s story impacted everyone who heard it. She had followed Naomi to a strange land with an uncertain future out of love for her mother-in-law. Now, Ruth acted with virtue in her approach before Boaz.

Boaz knew he was not the closest redeemer for Ruth and explained the circumstances to her. A closer family redeemer had the right to their land and Ruth. How would Ruth respond to this new reality? Boaz’s tenderness toward her calmed her heart. He promised Ruth, ***But if he doesn’t want to redeem you, as the LORD lives, I will.*** With her future secured, Ruth could sleep at peace, and peace was what Boaz offered by telling her to ***lie down until morning.*** Nothing gives you peace like knowing you are secure in God’s promises. Nothing allows you to truly rest like knowing you are safe in God’s gracious care.



What might keep us from trusting God with our fears?

FUTURE REDEEMED (RUTH 4:13-17)

¹³ Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. He slept with her, and the LORD granted conception to her, and she gave birth

to a son.¹⁴ The women said to Naomi, “Blessed be the LORD, who has not left you without a family redeemer today. May his name become well known in Israel.”¹⁵ He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. Indeed, your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.”¹⁶ Naomi took the child, placed him on her lap, and became a mother to him.¹⁷ The neighbor women said, “A son has been born to Naomi,” and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

VERSE 13

Boaz fulfilled his promise to find the closer family redeemer. He went to the city gate where men would conduct business in the presence of witnesses and under the approval of the city elders. When Boaz confronted his family member, he explained the details of the transaction, which included Elimelech’s land. When Boaz told him that the deal hinged on taking Ruth as his wife, he refused. The man stated that acceptance would have ruined his inheritance. The reasons could have been the apparent awkwardness of bringing another woman into his home, and he could have had grown sons already enjoying the inheritance of their lands.

We may not understand God’s ways, but we can always trust His protection and care.

Boaz called the witnesses to hear his commitment. They agreed and blessed Boaz. Shortly afterward, he fulfilled his promise to be Ruth’s kinsman-redeemer. They married, and the Lord granted her a son. Ruth had not been able to conceive during her marriage to Mahlon. Her infertility to this point might explain the obvious mention of the Lord’s gracious conception of Ruth. Her conception now, rather than in Moab where they worshiped Chemosh, the national deity whom they believed demanded human sacrifice (2 Kings 3:27), was God’s divine providence. We may not understand God’s ways, but we can always trust His protection and care.

VERSES 14-16

Children in Israel were considered a blessing from the Lord. Now Naomi had a grandson. The people recognized God’s favor over Naomi’s family, who provided them with a ***family redeemer***. As Naomi entered Bethlehem months earlier, she arrived a bitter and

broken woman (1:20-21). Now, she held her grandson, who would further her son's name and be well known in Israel.

They praised Ruth's dedication and love as ***better . . . than seven sons***. Resting in her arms was the providential love of God. Naomi could not see it earlier. In her human frailty, she could only see the unfavorable circumstances of her life. But God's timing was perfect, and His plan was fulfilled. Even when we cannot understand God's ways, we can rest in His love. God works "all things together for the good of those who love him, who are called according to his purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

***Even when we cannot understand God's ways,
we can rest in His love.***

VERSE 17

The celebration had begun. Neighboring women throughout Bethlehem gathered to celebrate with Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi the fulfillment of their family redeemer. Mahlon's name and his descendants would continue. Jewish history would record and speak the names of Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi. Throughout church history, their story would be read and retold. Obed's name meant "servant." In Hebrew, his name was shortened from Obadiah, a common Hebrew name that meant "servant of the Lord."



KEY DOCTRINE: *God the Son*

In His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. (See Romans 5:6-10; Ephesians 1:7.)

Naomi's crisis had come to an end. Her family redeemer secured her future, and the generations who followed would know God's providential care. ***Obed*** was known only for being the father of ***Jesse*** and the grandfather to ***David***. But in Jewish history, he maintained the line to Israel's most illustrious king. In the genealogical list (Ruth 4:18-22), the father of Boaz is listed as Salmon. Salmon was married to the prostitute Rahab (Josh. 2:8-24).

Throughout Scripture, God uses men and women from every walk of life to fulfill His sovereign plan. Through His redeeming love, He settles our fears and replaces our shame with His grace.

APPLY THE TEXT

- + When believers face times of uncertainty, we will have to step out in faith.
- + We can turn to God with our fears and trust Him to respond.
- + We can be assured of God’s continual care for us since He demonstrated it in His redemptive plan.

 **Who in your small group has been walking through circumstances that are causing anxiety? How can your group encourage them to trust in the Lord? How can you communicate this week God’s redemptive love as their source of strength?**

 **We constantly face moments in life where our faith is tested and our fears dominate our emotions. How can knowing God’s providential care defeat fear’s domination and renew your faith so you experience God’s peace and joy through seasons of uncertainty?**



Memorize Colossians 1:14.

Prayer Needs

The Time of the Judges

W. Wayne VanHorn

The time of the Judges extended from the end of the conquest of the promised land until the selection of Saul as Israel's first king, approximately 1350–1050 BC.

Events in the book of Ruth took place during the time of the judges (Ruth 1:1) and depicted a famine-stricken family forced to journey from Bethlehem to find work and sustenance in Moab.

Several interesting bits of information arise from Ruth's story related to the time of the judges. First, in Ruth 1:15, Naomi's daughter-in-law Orpah returned to her people and to her god. Ruth, however, vowed to stay with Naomi, accepting her people and her God (v. 16).

Second, during the time of the judges, both Israelites and their neighbors believed each people group had its own gods. Israel was monotheistic; their God was Yahweh. The other nations worshiped multiple gods.

Third, the common people of the land were agrarians, surviving off the land, raising meager crops, and having a semi-nomadic lifestyle tied to finding grazing land for sheep and cattle. Life was hard.

The occasion of Saul's selection as Israel's first king marked the end of the time of the judges. Samuel, the last judge, asked to be declared honorable in all aspects of his leadership as Saul took the reins of power (1 Sam. 12:1-5). The book of 1 Samuel then describes the time of the judges as one in which the Israelites forgot the Lord their God (vv. 9-12). Each episode of forgetfulness resulted in oppression at the hands of an enemy nation. As their faithfulness to Yahweh waned, their idolatrous worship of Baal and Asherah intensified (vv. 9-19). Apparently, this cyclical problem persisted well into the monarchical period as well, being condemned by the eighth century prophet Hosea in Israel and by Jeremiah in Judah a century later.

A TIME OF UNFAITHFULNESS

When the Israelites entered the land of Canaan, they marched in with a belief Yahweh had delivered them from Egyptian bondage and had made them His covenant people.



Just as the Lord had delivered them from Pharaoh at the Red Sea (Ex. 14:14), so Moses promised God would fight for them during the conquest of the promised land (Deut. 1:30; 20:4). The conquest, under the leadership of Joshua, was deemed Yahweh's victory.

According to Judges 2:7, the Israelites worshiped Yahweh throughout the lifetimes of Joshua and the elders who outlived him. The firsthand experiences of seeing the Lord's great works emboldened the people to be faithful. Tragically, as Joshua and his generation passed from the scene, the next generation did not know the Lord or His works on their behalf. The brutal realities of having to squeeze out a crop from an often-stubborn land prompted the Israelites to enhance their chances by worshiping the gods of the peoples around them.

In Canaan, the non-Israelites worshiped Baal, the storm god, and his female counterpart Asherah. The Israelites erroneously believed that worshiping Baal would guarantee the rains needed for their crops. Similarly, worshiping Asherah would guarantee the fertility and productivity of the land. Apparently, at times they worshiped Baal and Asherah to the extent of forgetting Yahweh altogether (1 Sam. 12:9). At other times, they apparently worshiped both Yahweh and Baal, seeing no problem with this syncretistic approach to religion (1 Kings 18:21).

Additional forms of idolatry also occurred during the time of the judges. For example, Judges 17 recounts the story of a man named Micah, who stole 1,100 pieces of silver from his mother. Upon returning the silver, his mother consecrated the silver to the Lord. She then promptly commissioned a silversmith to cast the metal into the form of an idol, which Micah then enshrined in his home.

A TIME OF FAITHFULNESS

The roll call of the faithful in the book of Hebrews names four judges: Gideon, Barak, Samson, and Jephthah (Heb. 11:32). They serve as a sampling of faithful people whom the Lord used to restore His people during the time of the judges.

The Lord used Gideon to usher in a forty-year period of peace after he defeated the Midianites (Judg. 8:28). Barak, with Deborah's encouragement, was able to defeat Sisera and his king, Jabin of Hazor (chaps. 4–5). Samson, perhaps the least competent of all the judges, was Yahweh's servant in delivering Israel from Philistine oppression (chaps. 13–16). The Lord also used Jephthah to subdue the Ammonites (11:1–12:7).

THE JUDGES OF THE TIME

The book of Judges mentions twelve judges by name. Modern commentators refer to six of these judges as “major judges” because of the importance attached to their administrations. These “major judges” were Othniel, Ehud, Deborah (and Barak), Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson. The six named “minor judges” are: Shamgar, Tola, Jair, Ibzan, Elon, and Abdon. Most of these judges were military leaders who marshaled Israel's forces to fight against whatever nation was oppressing them at a given time. In the case of Deborah, she provided the spiritual and moral encouragement for her general Barak, who carried out the military campaigns.

During the time of the judges, not all of the tribes necessarily fought in each of the battles, though they no doubt did perceive themselves as a homogeneous

kinship group. For example, according to Judges 4:6–10, Barak summoned only the tribes of Zebulun and Naphtali to fight against Sisera and his forces. Similarly, Jephthah seems to have summoned warriors from part of the tribe of Manasseh and from among the Gileadites (11:29). Samson, though, was a solo act (16:27–31).

We consider the time of the judges to be an era in which the Lord used charismatic military leaders to deliver His people from oppressing nations. In each case, Yahweh raised up the oppressing nations in order to discipline His wayward people. Only by Yahweh's prompting did the judges arise to deliver His people. From the biblical writer's perspective then, the time of the judges was marked by the vicissitudes of the faithfulness and unfaithfulness of God's people. When they sinned against the Lord, He sent oppressing nations to discipline them. When the people cried out to Yahweh, He sent liberating judges to drive the oppressors out of the land. All along, the common people worked the recalcitrant land to secure a meager crop to survive another day.

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COMING **NEXT QUARTER**



ROMANS

Session 1:	True Power (Romans 1:13-25)
Session 2:	Coming Judgment (Romans 2:1-13)
Session 3:	Saving Faith (Romans 3:21–4:5)
Session 4:	Restored Relationship (Romans 5:1-11,18-21)
Session 5:	Freedom (Romans 6:1-14)
Session 6:	Struggle (Romans 7:4-6,14-25)
Session 7:	Indwelt (Romans 8:14-27)
Session 8:	Believe (Romans 9:30–10:3,9-17)
Session 9:	Kindness (Romans 11:11-24)
Session 10:	Sacrifice (Romans 12:1-13)
Session 11:	Represent (Romans 13:1-14)
Session 12:	Unity (Romans 14:5-20)
Session 13:	Purpose (Romans 15:14-21,30-33)

Explore

“You will seek me and find me when you search for me
with all your heart.” Jeremiah 29:13

The Conquest of Canaan

"The Conquest of Canaan" is adapted from "The Conquest of the Promised Land," *The Old Testament Bible Handbook* (Holman Reference, 2023), p. 79. Used with permission.



JOSHUA; JUDGES; RUTH

In this life, leaders come, and leaders go. No matter who we are or what we do, we answer to a leader one way or another. In fact, the question really isn't if we will follow a leader, but what kind of leader we will choose. The biblical history books of Joshua, Judges, and Ruth examine the highs and lows of leadership. While Joshua celebrates the blessings of leadership at its best, Judges offers a cautionary tale of leadership gone wrong. And Ruth reminds us that even in the worst of times, God is still at work, raising leaders from the most unlikely of places. By studying Joshua, Judges, and Ruth, we see leadership from every angle—and we're challenged to reserve our ultimate loyalty for our ultimate Leader.

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