



A Bible Study on the **Book of Ruth** for teen girls to reflect on the Sovereignty and Providence of God in the lives of His people



Dear

[please insert your name here]

As you know, I have a heart for you and a desire to see you become a woman who is passionate about God and His Word. My prayer for you is that you believe that God is who He says He is and can do what He says He can do.

There is nothing more wonderful than to study a book of the Bible in its entirety and to see how God's amazing plan of redemption is woven through each book of the Old Testament.

The Book of Ruth is a beautiful short narrative but rich in meaning and significance. In this study I have also included four biographies of Women of Faith from history who made a difference because of their faith and their desire to serve God faithfully and glorify Him. Their stories will inspire you.

Not only is Ruth a book about a godly woman, it is a book about trust, loyalty, romance and love. It is a book about the redemption, grace and hope we have in God. It is a book about God's sovereign plan and His hand of providence which is intricately involved in our lives.

I hope you are ready and excited. Studying God's Word will never disappoint, but will take you on journey of discovery into Truth and will enable you to get to know the God who has redeemed you in love.

As you study this little book, (it has only 4 chapters and 85 verses), you will stand back in awe at how God works out His sovereign plan in the lives of His children. He works in ways you or I could never imagine.

May we be humbled by our magnificent God and may we be ready to be used of Him for His purposes and for His glory.

Without further ado, lets get started...

Yours in Christ,

Leanne

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## Week 1

'our Goo

will be my God.

Ruth 1:16

# Background

The book of Ruth has been called "the greatest piece of literature ever written."

It has been called the "Cinderella" of the Bible.

It is one of the loveliest short stories ever written where literary art and theological insight are at its very finest.

The book of Ruth is a **narrative** and **historical book** and the design of Israel's historical literature was to teach about the way in which YWHW (Yahweh), their covenant God, acted in history.

Before reading anything from Scripture, what do you know about Ruth?

# Here's the blurb on the book of Ruth:

- It is the story of how a pagan girl named Ruth came to be part of the covenant people of Israel and an ancestress of the Messiah (Matthew1:5)
- The book of Ruth is a poetic story of redemption, of love, of grace and of hope.
- The book of Ruth is a simple, humble, idyllic narrative that is found sandwiched between the violence and bloodshed of Joshua and the Judges and the marching conquests and confrontations of Judah and Israel.
- The book of Ruth is a beautiful OT picture, designed by God, to illustrate the wonderful truths of the Christian faith as expounded in the NT.
- 'In the book of Ruth, God is at work in a very unusual way, is a sequence of events involving a Bethlehem farmer, a foreigner from Moab and a lady who had faced a triple bereavement.' [Alistair Begg]

In the book of Ruth, we see God's faithful, sovereign, providential, gracious and loving hand at work. The name of God is mentioned more than 20 times in the 85 verses of Ruth.

 The book of Ruth enables us to know God as transcendent and immanent: Two big theological words that you need to know, because they are so rich in meaning for you personally...

# TRANSCENDENT

The Transcendent God means the Creator God who guides the planets in orbit and sets the stars in place. (God above and independent of the created universe)

# IMMANENT

The Immanent God means God is intricately involved in our lives who guides us and cares for us. His activity in nature, humans and history. (God's presence in His creation)

# Chapter 1 – THE FAVONE

- Read through the entire book of Ruth in one sitting in your own Bible.
- Read through **chapter 1** printed below.

## Take your coloured markers and mark the following:



- Naomi and Ruth in 2 different colours
- Mark any references to time with a green
- Underline any geographical references in orange
- Highlight the word "daughters-in-law"/ "my daughters"
- Mark any reference to God with a red  $\triangle$
- Circle the words "return" or "turn again"
- Mark the word 'bitter' in v.13,20

## **Ruth's Decision**

- 1 Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons.
- 2 The name of the man *was* Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi; and the names of his two sons *were* Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there.
- 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons.
- 4 They took for themselves Moabite women *as* wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years.
- 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband.
- 6 Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the land of Moab, for she had heard in the land of Moab that the LORD had visited His people in giving them food.
- 7 So she departed from the place where she was, and her two daughters-inlaw with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah.
- 8 And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you as you have dealt with the dead and with me.
- **9** "May the LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept.
- 10 And they said to her, "No, but we will surely return with you to your people."

- **11** But Naomi said, "Return, my daughters. Why should you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?
- **12** "Return, my daughters! Go, for I am too old to have a husband. If I said I have hope, if I should even have a husband tonight and also bear sons,
- **13** would you therefore wait until they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters; for it is harder for me than for you, for the hand of the LORD has gone forth against me."
- **14** And they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.
- **15** Then she said, "Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and her gods; return after your sister-in-law."
- **16** But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God.
- **17** "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me."
- **18** When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she said no more to her.
- **19** So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was stirred because of them, and the women said, "Is this Naomi?"
- **20** She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.
- **21** "I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?"
- 22 So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-inlaw, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.

# **What do you think is the key verse of chapter 1**?

#### Personal observations

# Find and highlight the geographical places that you marked, on the map.

The author continually reminds us that Ruth was from Moab. In other words, she is not an Israelite. She is a pagan from a pagan land. (A Moabite) She would not have grown up worshipping the God of the Israelites. The Moabites were considered an inferior people descended from an incestuous union ( See Genesis 19:30-38) Mosaic law said that no Ammonite or Moabite or any of their descendants may enter the House of the Lord, even down to the 10th generation

(Deuteronomy 23:3) because Ammon and Moab had consistently been hostile toward Israel. *"To the 10th generation"* implies forever



#### As this is a narrative – we can observe the "characters, setting and plot."

?

#### **Characters**:

List all the characters mentioned in chapter 1 and using a concordance, record the meanings of their names.

Name	Meaning

## ?

#### Setting:

What phrase opens the book of Ruth and tells you the time period? (Read the last verse of Judges)

If there were bloggers during this time of History, their blogs would be comments on the instability, civil unrest, moral decay, religious decline and unchecked corruption of the day.

The Story opens with Naomi in a sad predicament – she has no children to care for her in her old age and no grandchildren to cheer her spirit. Yet who would have thought that through this the **Providence of God** would lead to her daughter-in-law's conversion, and through that, in her lineage to the birth of David, the King of Israel, and through that to the birth of the Messiah.

## **WORD STUDY**

The **Hebrew** for **return** and **turn again** used in v. 6, 8,11,12, 12 and 15 is: **Shub (shoob) = to turn back (literally / figuratively) = to retreat again** 

The **Hebrew** for **daughters-in-law** used in verses 7, 8 is: **Kallah (kallaw) = bride, a son's wife, hence daughter-in-law** 

The **Hebrew word** for **my daughters** used in verses 11 and 12 is: **bath = a daughter (literally / figuratively)** 

In a Biblical narrative, we are able to observe the **actions** of all the characters, but not so easily their **motives.** However, there are two schools of thought among biblical scholars regarding Naomi's motives in chapter 1. It has been suggested that Naomi may not have been entirely selfless when it came to encouraging Ruth and Orpah to return to their families and culture. Rather, self-preservation may have been uppermost in her mind. Naomi had lost her security, and her significance in Moab, and would have most likely been dependent on the charity and compassion of family in Bethlehem. Arriving in Bethlehem with two pagan women as her sidekicks might have made it a tad awkward and difficult for her.



What do you notice about the relationship that Naomi had with Ruth and Orpah?



What obvious difference can be noted between Ruth & Orpah in v. 14-16?
List the things that Naomi acknowledged about God from Chapter 1
Verse 6
Verse 8
Verse 13
Verse 20
Verse 21
In verses 11-13 Naomi is urging Ruth and Orpah to count the cost:
They must choose between Yahweh + Nothing in Bethlehem OR Everything – Yahweh in Moab. Orpah goes back, but Ruth refuses to go back, despite the urging of Naomi. Naomi's Yahweh was worth the cost to Ruth. (v.16-17)
To understand Naomi's words in v. 11-13 ,you need to study Deut. 25:5-10 Take note of every reference to the "husband's brother."

The husband's brother was to marry the widow of his brother so as to give her a child who could then carry on the brother's name and be the heir to the brother's property.

Naomi is saying that she is too old to marry and have more sons who could grow up and marry Ruth and Orpah and provide sons to carry on Mahlon and Chilion's names. She is giving them freedom to return to their pagan families and marry other Moabite men.

The Book of Ruth invites us to glimpse something more than just the words of a narrative. We glimpse the **GOSPEL.** God's actions in human history are to redeem and reveal and He has raised up Prophets and Apostles to provide both the record of God's intervention by way of revelation and redemption and to provide the interpretation of that in Holy Scripture itself. [Alistair Begg]

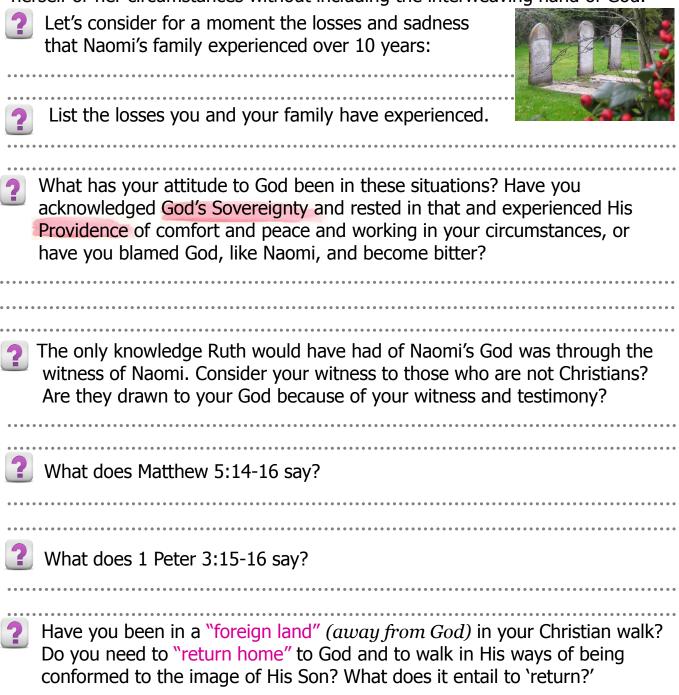
On the biographical sketches in the appendix, fill in what you can from chapter 1 on Ruth and Naomi.

Draw a simple family tree for Elimelech's family (Using Chapter 1 and 4)





We may often look at our lives and the problems we face and the sadness and dysfunction and trials and hardships and unfairness, and like Naomi be tempted to say, "The hand of the Lord is against me." Consider, however, that in these words of Naomi's, she is acknowledging that she cannot explain herself or her circumstances without including the interweaving hand of God.

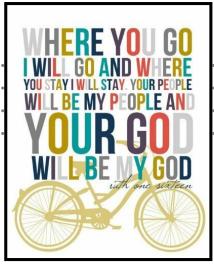


When we meet the 3 women on the road in chapter 1, the backdrop is one of poor choices, sad experiences and deep disappointments. Famine was a result of rebellion against God and **pragmatism** won out over **obedient faith** in Elimelech's choice. But God's *'hesed'* **loving kindness** is illustrated in his grace and mercy when His people return to Him in faith and repentance.



Paraphrase Ruth's commitment and decision in v.16-17.

In essence, this is **Ruth's conversion.** This is her testimony of believing in Israel's God, Yahweh. In Ruth, we see God reaching across the barriers of race and culture into the life of Ruth and saving her. She is part of God's redemptive plan, just as Rahab was.





## Write out **Revelation 5:9**.

We see Ruth responding to the clear call of God and not turning back, but counting the cost and entering through the narrow gate.

**RUTH BELIEVED!** She came to trust in Yahweh as her God.

## Do you believe?

- Have you turned your back on the substitute gods of the world in which you live ?
- Have you been embraced by the loving-kindness of God that has been manifest to you in so many ways?
- Have you counted the cost and entered through the narrow gate?

If you are a believer, share your conversion testimony below:

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FANNY CROSBY

## **Blind hymn writer**

When I was a little baby, six weeks old, in April 1820, my eyes became sore and red. A stranger who claimed to be a doctor put hot cloths on my eyes and, although the infection went away, white scars formed over my eyes. Afterward, I couldn't see.

Poor Mother. 1820 turned out to be a terrible year for her. Not only were my eyes blinded, but my father died that year after getting sick from working in a field in the pouring rain.



#### What Grandma Taught Me While Mama Was Away

Mother had to go to work as a housekeeper for a rich family. I stayed home with Grandma Eunice. Grandma taught me all about flowers, trees, sunsets, and birds--she showed me how to handle things and remember them by the way they felt. In the autumn we took walks through the meadow and gathered leaves until we made a large pile. After I'd jumped in them, Grandma always handed me a leaf and asked me to tell her which tree it came from. It didn't take long until I knew the names and descriptions of all the trees, flowers and birds among the hills outside our home.

One day I didn't do what I was told, and my grandmother slapped my hands. It made me mad, so when my friend David Ketcham came to my house and asked me to come play with him, I thought, yes, I will play with you, but I will hurt you because my grandma hurt me.

I picked up a stone and threw it toward his voice. I missed! Poor David had no idea why I was angry. I was so glad he didn't tell on me!

But Grandma still loved me, even if I did disobey her sometimes. And I loved her and enjoyed listening to her as she prayed, recited poetry and read the Bible to me every day. She said that God had a special purpose for everything he made including me, Frances Jane Crosby! (Everyone called me Fanny.)

#### **Memorizing Whole Books of the Bible**

I memorized where furniture and doors were in our house. I walked around easily, but the hardest thing about being blind is that I couldn't go to school with the other children. I could play with them, but how do you read when you can't see? As I grew older, Grandma helped me to memorize parts of the Bible. In fact, by the time I was 12 years old I had memorized all of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The Bible verses were like friends that cheered me up whenever I felt sad about not going to school. When I was eight years old, I made up a poem and recited it to Grandma.

If you take 15 hymnbooks (or history books) and stack them one on top of the other, that's about how many songs Fanny Crosby wrote in her lifetime! Oh, what a happy child I am, Although I cannot see! I am resolved that in this world Contented I will be! How many blessings I enjoy That other people don't! To weep or sigh because I'm blind, I cannot and I won't.

## School Was an Answer to Prayer but I Cried Going There

One evening, I crept toward my bedroom window and knelt there in the moonlight and prayed this simple prayer over and over:

"Dear Lord, please show me how I can learn like other children."

One afternoon, when I was 14 years old, Mother met me at our front gate and I heard a paper rustling in her hand. She told me that the paper told about the New York Institution for the Blind where I could go to school.

I clapped my hands with excitement!

"Oh, thank God, Mother! He has answered my prayer just as I knew He would!"

Although I was very excited to go to school, it was far away from my mother, and I cried on the way to the school. I cried again the night I arrived there. My second day there, I wasn't as homesick anymore. In fact, I actually loved most of my classes. A teacher made books with raised letters on the pages. I felt the shape of the letters with my fingers and I could read!

## **Terrible at Math, Gifted with Words**

I was terrible at math, but I became very good at writing poems. In fact, all my friends spoiled me by praising my poetry all the time. My teacher, Mr. Jones, finally called me into his office and told me that I had listened to their flattery until I became too proud! Mr. Jones said I was talented, but my poems still needed work.

Then he asked me, "Fanny, have I hurt your feelings?"

Something inside of me knew that this teacher was telling the truth, so I answered, "No, sir. You have talked to me like a father, and I thank you very much for it." From then on, I tried my best not to allow the sin of pride in my heart.

My teachers helped me to write better poetry, and after a few years, I wrote poems for presidents and governors, and I recited my poems to them when they came to visit our school. Even when people liked my poems very much, I remembered my talk with Mr. Jones and I didn't let their flattering words make me proud.

Mother was so pleased with my new school! After I graduated from the New York Institution for the Blind, I became a teacher there.

On March 5, 1858, I married one of the boys who went to my school. His name was Alexander van Alstine (I called him Van), and many said he was the finest organist in New York City! In fact, Van played the organ, I played the harp and piano, and pretty soon my poems were turning into songs. I liked to write songs that made people want to ask Jesus into their hearts.

#### **Presidents and Preachers Wanted My Songs**

Not only did I sing and write songs, but I was asked to travel to different cities and speak. I loved to tell people about Jesus.

Famous preachers and presidents used my songs in their special meetings. I can hardly believe that in my lifetime I wrote more than 9,000 songs! We put these songs into hymnbooks for everyone to sing along with us.

#### PostScript

Fanny Crosby's music is still treasured by millions today. Her extraordinary life can be seen in a movie simply called *The Fanny Crosby Story*. It tells about God's grace and goodness as seen through the beauty of her music.

Fanny lived to be 95 years old. She looked forward to seeing Jesus' face—yes, seeing Jesus—with her new eyes in heaven.

[www.christianhistorytimeline.com]



## Week 2

# Background

In chapter 2, we see the mood of the story change. The emptiness of chapter 1 starts being replaced with fullness. We see the provision God has made in His law:

God, in his mercy to the foreigners, widows and the poor, instituted laws that governed the harvesting of produce to ensure that no one went empty handed.

**Leviticus 19:9-10** clearly said that the reapers of the harvest were to leave the corners of the field and the gleanings of the harvest for those in need. Ruth then, as a Gentile, went out to glean and she just **happened** to do so in the field belonging to **Boaz**. Thousands of fields to choose from and she "just happened upon" Boaz's field!

What did **Deuteronomy 24:21** command?

How did that apply to Ruth?

What does **Proverbs 16:9** tell us?

As you will see, the **first verse of chapter 2** introduces us to the **next character** in our story. **His name is Boaz**, and he will be the **hero** of the story. He will the "prince," the "knight in shining armour!" "He was the grandson of Nahshon, who was prince of the tribe of Judah in the wilderness, and son of Salmon, probably a younger son, by Rahab, the harlot of Jericho. He carries might in his name, **Boaz="in him is strength,"** and he was of the family of **Elimelech**, that family which was now reduced and brought so low."

#### [Matthew Henry's Commentary]

"She happened

to come to the field of Boaz"

Ruth 2:3

• We will see that Boaz showed kindness to Ruth, and showed her a great deal of favour, because of what he had heard about her. God was also obviously working in his heart and moved his heart to show her grace.

 Remember – Bethlehem was a small town and Ruth, although a believer in Naomi's God, would have looked different as she was from a different culture and nation. Her presence in the city must have caused a stir among the citizens and there must have been a lot of whispering about her and curiosity about her. She did not go unnoticed.

# Chapter 2 – THE FIELD

• Read through **chapter 2** printed below.

## Take your coloured markers and mark the following:



- Naomi and Ruth in 2 different colours
- Highlight any reference to Boaz in blue
- Circle the words: "grace, favour, kindness, blessed" in orange
- Mark any reference to God/Jehovah with a red  $\triangle$
- Block "kinsman/kindred/near of kin/redeemer" in purple
- Underline the word "glean" in green

## **Ruth's Devotion**

- **1** Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.
- 2 And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, "Please let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after one in whose sight I may **find** favour." And she said to her, "Go, my daughter."
- **3** So she departed and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.
- 4 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, "May the LORD be with you." And they said to him, "May the LORD bless you."
- **5** Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?"
- **6** The servant in charge of the reapers replied, "She is the young Moabite woman who returned with Naomi from the land of Moab.
- 7 "And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' Thus she came and has remained from the morning until now; she has been sitting in the house for a little while."
- 8 Then Boaz said to Ruth, "Listen carefully, my daughter. Do not go to glean in another field; furthermore, do not go on from this one, but stay here with my maids.
- **9** "Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Indeed, I have commanded the servants not to touch you. When you are thirsty, go to the water jars and drink from what the servants draw."
- 10 Then she fell on her face, bowing to the ground and said to him, "Why have I found favour in your sight that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?"

- **11** Boaz replied to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.
- **12** "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."
- 13 Then she said, "I have found favour in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me and indeed have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants."
- 14 At mealtime Boaz said to her, "Come here, that you may eat of the bread and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers; and he served her roasted grain, and she ate and was satisfied and had some left.
- **15** When she rose to glean, Boaz commanded his servants, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not insult her.
- "Also you shall purposely pull out for her *some grain* from the bundles 16 and leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."
- **17** So she gleaned in the field until evening. Then she beat out what shehad gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.
- **18** She took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. She also took it out and gave Naomi what she had left after she was satisfied.
- **19** Her mother-in-law then said to her, "Where did you glean today and where did you work? May he who took notice of you be blessed." So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked and said, "The name of the man with whom I worked today is Boaz."
- 20 Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, "May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead." Again Naomi said to her, "The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives."
- 21 Then Ruth the Moabitess said, "Furthermore, he said to me, 'You should stay close to my servants until they have finished all my harvest."
- 22 Naomi said to Ruth her daughter-in-law, "It is good, my daughter, that you go out with his maids, so that others do not fall upon you in another field."
- 23 So she stayed close by the maids of Boaz in order to glean until the end of the barley harvest and the wheat harvest. And she lived with her mother-in-law.



# What do you think is the key verse of chapter 2?

Day 3	
We are intro told about h	duced to Boaz in chapter 2:1. What are we im?
•••••	
(A picture of C the chapters, b	nd theologians agree that <b>Boaz is a "type" of Christ</b> . hrist.) This will be explained and illustrated as we go through ut I want you to keep this in mind as you follow Boaz's e and character in the narrative.
<b>?</b> What is Ruth	's plan in verse 2 and what happens in verse 3?
Two more t	neological terms are evident throughout the book of Ruth: God's sovereignty and God's providence.
SOVEREIGN' PROVIDENC	God is omnipotent; He can do anything He desires to do.
<b>?</b> Why is Boaz s	so generous and gracious to Ruth? (v.11)
	on Boaz's kindness to her in v10. What evidences of Boaz's ve see in the following verses?
Verse 8-9 Verse 11-12 Verse 13 Verse 14	
What was Rut verse 10,13 ?	h hoping for in verse 2 and how did God answer that in
	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •
	az's blessing to Ruth in verse 12.
2 What does Na	omi acknowledge about God in verse 20?

The NIV can cause some confusion as to whether the 'He' in v.20 is referring to the LORD or to Boaz. The literal translations (KJV, ESV, NKJV and NASB) all translate the Hebrew as it being **God's kindness** to her that is being shown through Boaz.

Day4

At the end of the day she was left with an **ephah of barley**.

**An ephah = 22 litres**. That would be enough to feed both herself and Naomi for about 10 days.

No wonder Naomi was surprised and had to know where she had got this!

What commendable aspects of Ruth's character do you notice from this chapter?

Verse	Characteristic	and the second second second
2-3		14
7		
10		
11		Marine Marine Installe
23		

On the biographical sketches in the appendix, fill in what you can from chapter 2 on Ruth and Naomi and Boaz.

## WORD STUDY

The **Hebrew** for the word: **kinsman** used in verse 1 is: **moda (mo-dah) = acquaintance (literally)** Here referring to one who is intimately acquainted, one's near relation.

The **Hebrew** for the word: **kindred** used in verse 3 is: **minniy (min-nay)** = **part of a family, circle of relatives**, a tribe or people, family, kind(red)

The **Hebrew** for the word: **redeemer** used in verse 20 is: **goel (ga-wal) = to buy back a relative's property, marry his widow etc, an avenger, deliverer, ransom, purchase, redeem** 

- The kinsman-redeemer is one of the main themes in the book of Ruth.
- The entire plot revolves around the kinsman-redeemer
- The responsibilities of the kinsman redeemer had been clearly defined in God's law and included marrying a childless widow to raise up children in her dead husbands' name. (Deut 25:10)

Do you see the progression here? Do you see the beginning of God's plan?

• The redeemer had to be a blood relative.

To understand m the following pas	ore about the role of the kinsman-redeemer. Look up sages:	
Leviticus 25:25-34	-	
	• • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	
Numbers 27:8-11		
kin (relative) and the redeemer! I am sur Jehovah" was the sor sovereign provider Day 5 What heart chang	e has occurred in Naomi? See ch.1:20-21 and ch.2:20 our lives to God, what happens to us happens is by way	an e d's
Do you agree with	this quote? How is this illustrated in the book of Ruth?	
	a cork bobbing around on the ocean of chance. God is n all of our human choices, decisions responsibilities. G hings.' [Alistair Begg]	iod
God rewarded her your own life as to than you expected	her duty, hoping to find "favour." abundantly. Share a testimony from how God surprised you with more or hoped. How God's hand of en evident in your life?	
regarded Ruth as a see wonderful exan	able relationship between Ruth and Naomi. Naomi daughter and Ruth treated Naomi as her own mother. N ples of loyalty, respect, kindness, love and honour. How other/mother-in-law? Are these attitudes evident?	

(Consider Ephesians 6:1-3)

?

Ruth's reputation had gone before her. Boaz commended and blessed her because of what he had "heard" about her. What is your reputation? What do people say about you? What do others "hear" about you?

# Boaz is a man of great character, but his mother was Rahab, the prostitute, a woman who acknowledged and feared Israel's God!

I think the author wants us to marvel at the fact that God is able to reach into the stench and gutter of the fallen world and take the son of a prostitute and make him a bible hero. That he could redeem and save a prostitute and use her in the line of Christ! (Matthew 1:5)

**Never think that your background dictates your future as long as God is in the equation!** Regardless of your background, your dysfunctions, your past, or your family members or occupation or standing, if God is in the equation your past will not dictate your future. Boaz is a great example of this truth.

## To be a kinsman redeemer 3 things had to be true:

- 1. He had to be related Boaz was (v.1, 3 20)
- 2. He had to be able to redeem Boaz was a wealthy man (v.1)
- 3. He had to be willing to redeem He invites Ruth (ch.2)

The Hebrew word 'goel' (kinsmad-redeemer) is used of Yahweh often in the OT reminding the people of God that Yahweh is their divine next of kin. He is the One who comes alongside them as the One who has revealed Himself and will redeem His people. Therefore, as kinsman-redeemer, Boaz has the right to intervene in the circumstances of Naomi and Ruth. Boaz has the right to take on all their needs and troubles and to take them to himself and bear them as if they were his very own. This is a glorious picture of the Gospel!

**?** Remember – **Boaz is type/picture of Christ.** A picture for God to show what He would one day to redeem His people through His Son.

How is Christ our kinsman-redeemer? Note what these verse say:

John 3:35			••••••
1 Timothy 2:5			
1 Corinthians 6	:20	 • • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	 
	• • • • • • • • • • • • •	 • • • • • • • • • • • • • • •	 



## Do you see that Christ is our ultimate kinsman-redeemer?

Christ was born of a woman, Christ is able to redeem, Christ is willing to redeem, Christ invites us.

## PERPETUA

# Her prison became her palace

A young woman named Perpetua stood firm in her faith in the year AD 203 in Carthage, North Africa. Because she kept a diary, we know much about her ordeal. This story is based on her diary.

#### "I am a Christian"

It was simple, really. All I had to do to get out of prison was to offer a small sacrifice of incense to the pagan gods. a pinch of incense to honour the emperor Septimus and I would walk free. My father insisted that something this small should be easy for me to do. Why was I being so stubborn?

"Father, do you see this pitcher?" I asked as I pointed to the water pitcher on the table.

"I see it," he replied.

"Can it become a dog?"

"Of course not!" he exclaimed, looking at me as if my arrest had scrambled my brains. "It is a pitcher!"

"You're right. It cannot become something it is not, and it is ridiculous

for me to call it something else. So it is with me, Father. I am a Christian and cannot be called anything other than what I am. A Christian."

At this, my father's temper rose and he stormed from the prison cell in a fury. Once again, my convictions just didn't make sense to him.

## **Obedience**

Deep anguish pierced my heart as I sank down to the hard stone floor. How could I cause my dear father so much pain? I thought of how well he treated me over the years. Beautiful robes of the finest silk, expensive jewels to adorn my hair, and the choicest delicacies were all mine. My wellto-do father would spare no expense when it came to his only daughter. **Of course, Father expected obedience in return. All good Roman girls were taught to obey, and I was no exception. Disobedience simply wasn't an option. I had been taught to be loyal at all costs, and until now I had always done what was expected. It was easy to do since I adored him so. But now my heart ached, for I had no choice but to go against my father's command.** 



You see, my loyalty to my father was very strong, but even stronger was my loyalty to my Lord and Saviour. I had recently learned that Jesus died for my sins, and I had committed my life fully to Him. Love for Jesus filled my soul, and joy filled my heart. It wasn't long, however, before the authorities learned of my faith. They came in the evening and pulled me and my servant girl, Felicitas, also a Christian, out into the street. We were paraded in shame down the streets of Carthage to the prison.

#### **Dungeon or Palace?**

"Felicitas! Come sit here on this bit of straw and rest for a while," I said. "Oh, Lady Perpetua! It's so odd for you to be fussing over me!" "Felicitas, please don't call me that anymore! In Christ we are all equal. You are no longer my slave, but rather you are my sister and dear friend! Come now, you must get plenty of rest for the sake of your unborn baby."

The dark dungeon prison was a far cry from my comfortable Roman-style home. The heat and stench were nearly unbearable. Hunger overtook my body, but God sustained me and the other prisoners who were Christians. We cried out to God for relief, and took great comfort in prayer and song and in speaking God's Word.

Perpetua was baptized while in prison.

God even gave us visions and dreams that encouraged us in our journey. True relief came my way one special day.

The day they allowed my infant son to come and stay with me, I felt the prison had suddenly become like a palace! I no longer minded the horrible smell or the oppressive heat -- I had my sweet little baby to hold and to care for. I fed him and held him and sang to him our songs of faith. Night and day I prayed for him, trusting God for his future.

## **One Last Chance For Freedom**

"Perpetua, I beg you to offer the sacrifice. A simple pinch of incense won't mean anything!"

My case was before the Roman official, Hilarion, and my father had returned. His tears dropped on my hand as he begged me to abandon my Christian beliefs. "If you won't do it for me, then consider your infant son! Surely you don't intend to leave him behind for the sake of this new god you have found."

My stomach wrenched in pain as I thought of my family and my own sweet son. But no matter what, I could not dishonour my Saviour. I tried to comfort my father. "Whatever God wants to happen to me will happen. My strength doesn't come from myself, it comes from God."

Finally, the sentence was handed down. I was condemned to the arena and the wild beasts. I would be called upon to give my life for Jesus, just as He gave His life for me. I knew He would strengthen me for what I must do. The other Christians were also sentenced to death. We praised God when Felicitas' baby was born healthy and adopted by another believer. God also provided for my baby to be cared for by my family.

In our final days together, we prayed, sang and encouraged one another. We even celebrated the Lord's Supper on our last evening. God gave us the strength we needed to stand firm in our beliefs. We rejoiced knowing that our struggle would soon be over and we would be together in the presence of our Saviour!

That's as far as Perpetua's writing takes us. Other Christians added the rest of the story.

#### **Into the Arena**

When the believers entered the arena on the day of Their victory, their faces reflected great joy! They Had finally begun their journey from the dark prison to the light of God's presence.

The crowd became very angry, demanding that the gladiators whip those who were to die. Instead of becoming angry, the prisoners rejoiced that they were able to share in the sufferings of Jesus



A mad cow was set loose upon Perpetua and Felicitas. Perpetua was thrown to the ground first and then the cow charged toward Felicitas. Though her gown was torn, Perpetua was not hurt. She covered herself with her torn garment and pinned her hair back up. It seemed she wanted to look her best as she prepared to meet her Saviour. The two friends embraced, awaiting the end.

As the crowd demanded to see their death, Perpetua looked into the eyes of the gladiator who was to take her life. His hands trembled so badly he could barely hold his sword. Perpetua reached out and slowly guided the sword for him. As she whispered the name of our Saviour, she left this world and entered into the everlasting happiness of God's presence.

[www.christianhistorytimeline.com]

# Background

As you read chapter 3, you might find Naomi's plan very strange. But what she suggests to Ruth was according to the laws and traditions of Israel culture. If the plan had any appearance of evil to it, Naomi would not have suggested it.

Ruth, who was now **proselyted** to the true religion, had a legal claim upon Boaz. It was customary for widows to assert this claim, **Deut. 25:5-10**. But this is not recorded for imitation in other times, and is not to be judged by modern rules. And if there had been any evil in it, Ruth was a woman of too much virtue and too much sense to have listened to it. [Matthew Henry]

Week 3

# PROSELYTE

A proselyte was a stranger, a pagan who had come to believe in the God of Israel and live among God's people. Basically a proselyte is a convert. They have changed their religious belief.

## Some things to think about and consider:

- Biblical scholars have suggested that Naomi sending Ruth to the threshing floor was putting Ruth in a compromising position.
- Threshing floors were known to be places of drunkenness and sexual acts.



you say

T will

do.'

Ruth 3:

- Naomi seems to be impatient as the harvest is now over and Ruth will no longer be gleaning in Boaz's field.
- How will Boaz realise he has to marry Ruth unless Naomi steps in with a matchmaking plan?
- Fortunately Boaz is a godly, gracious man and he does not compromise Ruth's reputation and even sends extra barley home as a sign that he is committed to looking after Ruth and Naomi.

**Remember**, the book of Ruth is a narrative to show the *sovereign hand of God and the plan of redemption for His people*.

His people were not perfect, but He still used them mightily, despite their faults and sins and their choices and decisions. His plan still stands, unthwarted! The book of Ruth is not a prescriptive book that tells us how to live and so we must be very careful as to what principles we draw from the story to apply to our own lives and not get sidetracked from the main purpose of the book of Ruth.



Boaz's agreeing to be the kinsman-redeemer, is a wonderful foreshadowing of Christ, who in Himself, is the only One who has the right to take and bear as His own all that spoils and ruins, all the loss, hurt and disaster, all the brokenness and humiliation and sinful mess of our offense. He bears our sin in Himself. This is a picture of Christ and His bride, the Church. God's divine initiative!

# Chapter 3 – THE FLOOR

• Read through **chapter 3** printed below.

## Take your coloured markers and mark the following:

- Naomi and Ruth in 2 different colours
- Mark any reference to Boaz in blue
- Circle the words: floor / threshing floor
- Mark any reference to God/Jehovah with a red  $\triangle$
- Block "kinsman, kindred, near of kin, redeemer, redeem"
- Underline the words "maid" and "my daughter"
- Mark any references to time with a greet

#### **Ruth's Deliverer**

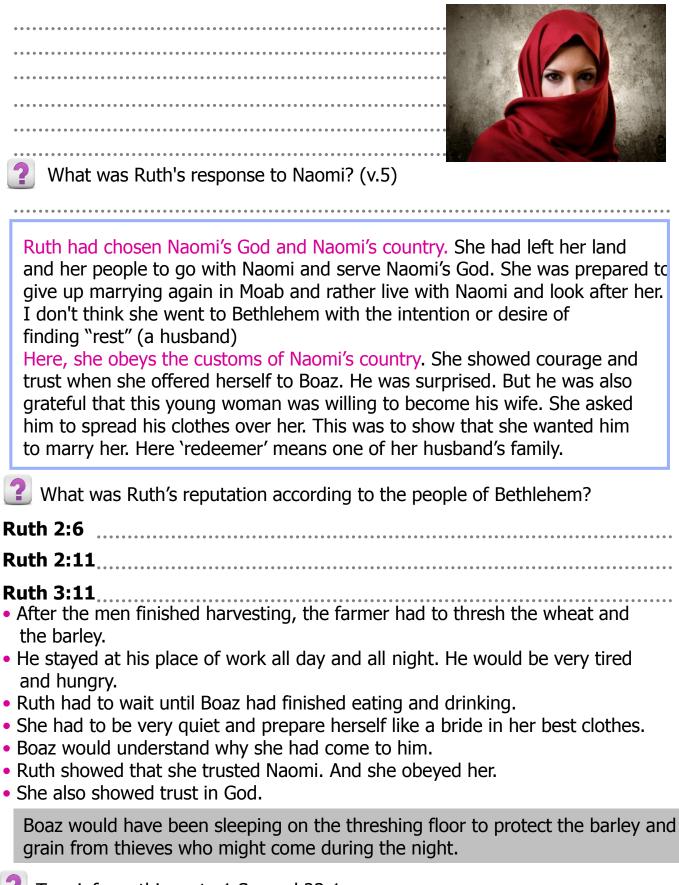
- **1** Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you?
- **2** "Now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maids you were? Behold, he winnows barley at the threshing floor tonight.
- **3** "Wash yourself therefore, and anoint yourself and put on your *best* clothes, and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.
- 4 "It shall be when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies, and you shall go and uncover his feet and lie down; then he will tell you what you shall do."
- 5 She said to her, "All that you say I will do."
- **6** So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had commanded her.
- 7 When Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came secretly, and uncovered his feet and lay down.
- 8 It happened in the middle of the night that the man was startled and bent forward; and behold, a woman was lying at his feet.
- **9** He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative."
- **10** Then he said, "May you be blessed of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown your last kindness to be better than the first by not going after young men, whether poor or rich.

- **11** "Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you whatever you ask, for all my people in the city know that you are a woman of excellence.
- **12** "Now it is true I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.
- **13** "Remain this night, and when morning comes, if he will redeem you, good; let him redeem you. But if he does not wish to redeem you, then I will redeem you, as the LORD lives. Lie down until morning."
- **14** So she lay at his feet until morning and rose before one could recognize another; and he said, "Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor."
- **15** Again he said, "Give me the cloak that is on you and hold it." So she held it, and he measured six *measures* of barley and laid *it* on her. Then she went into the city.
- **16** When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, "How did it go, my daughter?" And she told her all that the man had done for her.
- **17** She said, "These six *measures* of barley he gave to me, for he said, 'Do not go to your mother-in-law empty-handed.'"
- **18** Then she said, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today."

# What do you think is the key verse of chapter 3?

#### **Observations**

What were the specific instructions Naomi gave to Ruth? (v.2-4)



25

To reinforce this, note 1 Samuel 23:1

What happened at midnight? Describe it in your own words (v.8-9)
It is an amazing scene: We can well imagine that Boaz was indeed startled, waking up in the night as he turned in his sleep, knowing that someone was out there, but not being able to see clearly because of the darkness and the sleep in his eyes. Since Boaz had been there to protect against thieves, it must have given him quite a shock to wake up and know someone was there! But his shock quickly turned to wondering, when he found out the visitor was a woman. Since Boaz is a older than Ruth (refers to her as "daughter") Ruth expressed her desire to marry Boaz which the older, gracious Boaz would not have initiated with a younger woman.
<ul> <li>What feelings do you think Ruth was experiencing or what thoughts were going on in her mind as she waited? Put yourself in her position.</li> <li>What are Ruth's words to Boaz in verse 9?</li> </ul>
Basically this phrase, 'spread the corner of your garment over me' was another way of saying, 'I am a widow, take me as your wife.' It means cover me with your wings. (Refer back to Boaz's words to Ruth in chapter 2:12) <b>Ruth was proposing to Boaz!</b> We have no love declared, no hearts going aflutter, no mushy feelings. Remember, Boaz would probably have been a similar age to Naomi – He was much older than Ruth. <i>All we have is Ruth obeying a custom, and Boaz having showed her kindness and grace.</i> (But God is providentially and sovereignly at work in their hearts)
Even today, when a Jew marries a woman, he throws the skirt or end of his talith over her, to signify that he has taken her under his protection. The spreading of a skirt over a widow as a way of claiming her as a wife was a custom among Arabs of early days and it still exists among some modern Arabs today.
What are Boaz's words to Ruth in response to her "proposal" in verse 11? Compare them to Ruth's words to Naomi in verse 5?
Phow does Ruth refer to herself in v.9 and how does Boaz refer to her in v.10?

## WORD STUDY

The **Hebrew** for the word **maid (handmaid)** used in verse 9 is: **amah (aw-maw) = maidservant or female slave**.

# Day4

In ch.2:2, Ruth took the initiative to care for Naomi. What did she suggest?
In ch.3:1-2, Naomi takes the initiative to care for Ruth – What does she suggest? Look back to Naomi's words in Ruth 1:9 – what had Naomi wished Ruth and Orpah?
Why does Boaz tell Ruth to leave before the others awake in v.14? (See also verse 11)
What does Boaz's response in verse 18 tell us about him?
<ul> <li>Continue adding to your biographical sketches of Naomi, Ruth and Boaz.</li> <li>What is the significance of Boaz giving Ruth six measures of barley?</li> </ul>
Six measures - i. e. six seahs, in all two ephahs, twice as much as she gleaned and a heavy load to carry; for which reason he laid it on her, probably placed it on her head. It is well known that women can carry great weights when duly positioned on their heads.
The theme of emptiness to fullness is prevalent in the book and we see this theme developed from chapter 1 when Naomi returned 'empty.' In chapter 3 we see this fullness further as Ruth now has the promise and possibility of a new home, a new hope and a new happiness with Boaz as her kinsman-redeemer.
The word " <i>virtuous</i> "/" <i>excellent</i> " is used only 4 times in the Bible to describe women. Note what each reference says:

Ruth 3:11
Proverbs 12:4
Proverbs 31:10
Proverbs 31:29
27

Summarise what Boaz is meaning in verse 10 when he talks about Ruth's first kindness and her last kindness.

#### **Boaz** is saying something like

"It was wonderful when you agreed to care for an old woman, but it is marvelous in the extreme that you chose to respond to the love of an older man and deny yourself a husband in his prime" (a man of your own age).

.....

.....

What do Boaz's words in verse 12 mean for Ruth?

What do we learn about Boaz in verse 13 when he says `as the LORD lives, I will do it."? See also Naomi's comment in v.18.

True to the form of a narrative or "novella" we have reached the climax of the plot and sure enough, just before we can get to the resolution or the "happily ever after," we stumble across a **complication: "There is one closer than I,"** says Boaz to Ruth. How Ruth's heart must have sunk. But take heart, Boaz remains the hero and God has a wonderful way of working things out according to His wonderful plan! Do not stop reading!

#### This is quite an amazing chapter. Ruth trusts Naomi and even though she must have been apprehensive and fearful, she obeys in faith. There were no guarantees. How wonderfully she is rewarded!

Have you considered how much God wants to do for and with His children who will simply follow Him one step at a time? Share your own thoughts or experiences of walking by faith and not by sight.



## Take note of the following characteristics of Ruth:

- Devoted to her family (Ruth 1:15-18)
- Delighting in her work (Ruth 2:2)
- Diligent in her work (Ruth 2:7,17,23)
- Dependant on God (Ruth 2:12)
- Dressed with care (Ruth 3:3)
- Discreet with men (Ruth 3:6-13)
- Dedicated to godly speech (Ruth 2:10,13) Delivering blessings (Ruth 4:14-15)

Write today's date here:

Which **3 of the above characteristics** do you admire about Ruth?



	Over the next few weeks – commit, by God's grace, to grow and be "excellent" in these 3 areas.	
	Share these with you your daughters of Jerusalem and ask them to pray for you and hold you accountable in these 3 areas.	
	Put specific measures in place to make sure you persevere and not give up.	
	<b>?</b> How do you observe God's continued hand of providence in this chapter?	• • • • •
		• • • •
	Share how your view of God has grown your or changed you and how thi has encouraged you and challenged you.	is
•	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••	
	<b>?</b> Take note what these verses say about God's providence:	••••
	Matthew 10:29-31	
	Psalm 32:8	
	Hebrews 13:5-6	• • • •
	Lamentations 3:22-23	



# Long road to China

"Get off the train!" the Russian conductor shouted in words 30-year-old Gladys did not understand. But she could tell from his angry face that he wanted her to get up. However, Gladys did not move. She did not know everyone else was getting off the train because there was a fierce war going on up ahead. The train soon would be filled with only loud mouthed, bad-tempered soldiers. It was not a safe place for a woman travelling alone.



## The Long Walk Back

When the train reached the next stop, the conductor forced Gladys to get off. She was the only non-military person left on the train. She now had to walk alone 30 miles back to the nearest city, through the woods in the cold, snowy night. This was only the beginning of her troubles, though. In the many hours to come, she would have almost no food to eat, nearly freeze to death, and barely escape being forced to become a Soviet military machine operator.

Gladys knew God wanted her to go tell the Chinese about Jesus, but why was it so hard for her to get there? Could it be God was getting her ready for even harder times?

## **Not Good Enough**

Gladys grew up in London, England, in the early 1900s. As a teenager, she read a story about the Chinese that changed her life. She knew she must go tell them about God's love.

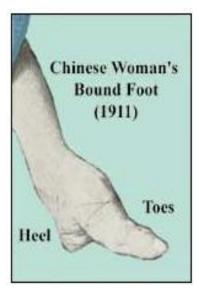
Gladys failed missionary training school. The director told her she wasn't smart enough to learn Chinese, and they would not accept her. But Gladys was determined. If the mission board would not send her to China, she would find her own way there.

To save money for her trip, Gladys went back to the only job she knew, being a maid. One day Gladys heard about an elderly missionary woman who was looking for someone to take over her work in China.

#### China at last!

When Gladys finally did arrive in China, she could not find the elderly missionary woman. Gladys was told she had moved to another village, a two-day mule ride into the mountains. So Gladys hired a mule to take her there. The missionary, 73-year-old Mrs. Jeannie Lawson, was surprised to see Gladys when she arrived at the village. She quickly put her to work repairing the big, old, rundown house that she lived in. The villagers thought the house was haunted. Mrs. Lawson wanted to turn the house into a hotel for the Chinese mule drivers. She would offer two things other hotels did not, dinner time Bible stories and beds without fleas. At first the mule drivers were afraid of the two white women they called "foreign devils." However, once inside, they loved the Bible stories and news of the hotel spread quickly. One day Mrs. Lawson slipped and fell from a second floor balcony. A few

weeks later, she died. After Mrs. Lawson's death, Gladys could not pay the hotel taxes. She was alone, without any money and was the only Englishspeaking person within a two-day mule ride. She did not know what to do. But guess what? God answered Gladys' prayer in a way she did not expect.



For many years, the feet of Chinese girls were wrapped tightly at birth to keep them from growing big. The Chinese thought small feet were prettier. A new law said that all foot-wrapping must end. The town governor asked Gladys to be his official foot inspector. At first, Gladys refused. She did not know why anyone would listen to someone they called "foreign devil." However, she also had the governor's okay to tell every villager about Jesus. Gladys went to every village taking off foot bandages and telling Bible stories. The job paid enough to cover the hotel taxes and many Chinese became Christians.

#### Ai-weh-deh

Gladys did such a good job as foot inspector that when a riot broke out in the town prison, she was called again. This time the prison governor wanted her to calm the prisoners down. Afraid, Gladys prayed for help and then convinced the prisoners to put down their weapons. Afterwards she visited the prison every day and helped make their living conditions better. From then on, everyone called her Ai-weh-deh, which means "The Virtuous One." On another day as Gladys walked through the village, she saw an old woman trying to sell a dirty little girl. She could not bear to leave the girl with the woman who did not care about her. Gladys bought the girl for less than two dollars. This little girl was the first of almost 100 unwanted children who came to live with Ai-weh-deh.

#### **Harder times**

For many years, the Japanese had been at war with China. Gladys thought the village she lived in was so well hidden it would never be attacked. However, one spring morning, Japanese planes filled the sky. They dropped bombs, destroying the village and killing many people. Gladys, who was upstairs leading a prayer group, was knocked out as she fell to the first floor below. When she woke up, she went out to help others who were hurt. The village was in shambles and dead bodies lay in the streets. Japanese foot soldiers were on their way to kill everyone who was still alive. Gladys, the orphaned children, and the villagers fled, finding safety in caves. As the Japanese continued to close in on them, she and the children walked many days without food but were able to catch the last train to freedom. Gladys became very ill. As soon as the children were taken care of, she fell into a coma. She was hospitalized for two months and almost died.

#### **One Last Visit to England**

Gladys decided to go back to England after many years in China. She had aged so much that her parents did not know her at first. The years in China had been hard on her. She often became confused. She thought she was still in China and would speak in Chinese. When she felt well enough she would speak at churches about the need for more missionaries to go to China. All the time Gladys missed China terribly. She knew she could not stay in England. Gladys was the first missionary to become a Chinese citizen. She went back to China and spent the rest of her life helping the Chinese. Gladys Aylward became known around the world for the sacrifice she made to help the Chinese learn the way to God. You can see the story of her life in a movie called *The Inn of Sixth Happiness.* 

[www.christianhistorytimeline.com]

## Week4

"And she became h

wife"

Ruth 4:13

# Background

#### The context :

The previous chapter left us with a "cliff-hanger" -

Ruth and Boaz are obviously in love, and want to get married, with Boaz exercising the right of the '**Goel'** - the kinsman-redeemer.

**BUT**, there is a kinsman closer to Ruth, and he has priority. He has first choice. Will he claim the right of kinsman-redeemer towards Ruth, and keep her and Boaz from coming together?

The book of Ruth opens with **three funerals** but closes with a **wedding** and a **birth**. If it was made into a **movie**, it could be called **"Three Funerals and a Wedding!"** 

There is a good deal of weeping recorded in the first chapter, but the last chapter records an overflowing of joy and hope in the little town of Bethlehem. There is the climax of the emptiness to fullness theme. 2000 years ago, the little town of Bethlehem witnessed the birth of Christ – the hope of our salvation!

What are the words of Psalm 30:5?

- We will see that God brings wonderful relationships to those who trust Him and wait on Him and do things His way.
- Even after her own great loss, Ruth chose to follow Naomi in selfless devotion, and was blessed by meeting Boaz when she went out to work.
- Ruth and Boaz demonstrate respect and holy boldness, and the blessings that come as a result.

• This story shows that God is inclusive of anyone who comes to faith, no matter heir background; He is able to bring about His sovereign plan in spite of all our questionable actions. God used both Ruth and Boaz to fulfil his kingdom plan, and he can use you, too.

What are Naomi's' words to Ruth about Boaz in chapter 3:18?

We are about to see how right she was and what a man of action Boaz is. The ball is now in Boaz's court – and boy, does he come through for them, as a true hero should! Boaz is about to "slay the dragon" for Ruth – or at least "get the sandal!" Read on and you will understand...

# Chapter 4 – THE FAMILY

• Read through **chapter 4** printed below.

## Take your coloured markers and mark the following:



#### **Ruth's Delight**

- Naomi and Ruth in 2 different colours
- Mark any reference to Boaz in blue
- Circle the words: "buy / bought"
- Mark any reference to God/Jehovah with a red  $\triangle$
- Block "kinsman, close(st) relative, redeemer, redeem"
- Mark "wife" in the same colour as you marked Ruth.
- Mark any references to time with a greer (
- 1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.
- 2 He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.
- **3** Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.
- **4** "So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* before those who are sitting *here,* and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it,* redeem *it;* but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem *it,* and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem *it.*"
- **5** Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."
- **6** The closest relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem *it* for yourself; you *may have* my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem *it.*"
- 7 Now this was *the custom* in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange *of land* to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the *manner of* attestation in Israel.

- **8** So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." And he removed his sandal.
- **9** Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.
- **10** "Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his *birth* place; you are witnesses today."
- **11** All the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah (Bethlehem) and become famous in Bethlehem.
- **12** "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman."
- **13** So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.
- **14** Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel.
- **15** "May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him."
- **16** Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse.
- **17** The neighbour women gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi!" So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.
- 18 Now these are the generations of Perez: to Perez was born Hezron,
- 19 and to Hezron was born Ram, and to Ram, Amminadab,
- 20 and to Amminadab was born Nahshon, and to Nahshon, Salmon,
- 21 and to Salmon was born Boaz, and to Boaz, Obed,
- **22** and to Obed was born Jesse, and to Jesse, David.

### **What do you think is the key verse of chapter 4**?

#### Observations



#### The Gate indicates the main entrance to a city.

The gate of the city "was the place of rule, where all matters were settled, all transfers made" (Ridout). A number of places in the Scripture illustrate the fact of doing business at the city gate (Genesis 19:1; 23:10; 34:20; 2 Samuel 15:2)



How does v. 1 show that Boaz was a man of action and true to his word?



#### A word to you girls:

When you know that God has asked you do something, when you know what the right thing to do is (even though it may change your life), do not delay in doing it. Obey and watch God work. When you have committed to something, do it. Then you will experience God's favour and blessing

- Before we look at exactly what happened at the gate, let's look at the specific blessings given to our characters. Record them below:
- Naomi (v.14-15)

### • Union of Boaz and Ruth (v.11-12)

2 Look at verse 1. Who just "happens" to be passing by?

'Was this the hand of God, or did Boaz arrange this "chance meeting?" I believe that perhaps it was both. Since Boaz knows this unnamed redeemer, he probably knows his schedule and some of his comings and goings.' [Brett W. Avants]

Summarise, in you own words, Boaz's offer to the closest relative

'What is probably going on here is that before Naomi and Elimelech left to go to Moab, they sold the rights to use the land to someone while they were away. The proceeds from this sale would have provided them a nest egg to use for moving and establishing their life in Moab. Now that Naomi is back in town, she probably wants to get the land back into the family. Since she can't afford it, a kinsman-redeemer can now buy the land back, or redeem the land, for their family.' [Brett W. Avants]



What is the closest relative's answer in verse 4?

However, Boaz now calls the redeemer to fulfill not just the letter of the law, but the spirit of the law, by agreeing to marry Ruth as well as take the land.



Why does he change his mind? Basically he is saying, "I will not."

### WORD STUDY

**The Hebrew** for the word **friend** in verse 1 is actually an idiom... **peloni almoni** a rhyming expression.

It is used two other times in the OT ('such and such') in 2Kings 6:8 and 1Samuel 21:2 which means **"a certain unnamed person or place".** The words "my friend" became a catch phrase in Israel.

**The Expositor's Bible Commentary** adds that... "The idiom was used when the writer did not deem it essential to give the person's name (cf. 1Sa 21:2; 2Ki 6:8). It does not mean that Boaz did not know his name. The use of this idiom here has also been interpreted as deliberate on the part of the storyteller. It was shameful not to fulfill the role of kinsmanredeemer, the kinsman was unworthy of mention by name."



If the man already had a wife and children, then the picture became even more complicated as this deal would have generated even more expenses and complicated inheritance matters with his own family.



What does the closest relative do in verse 8?



"In order to make every matter legal, a man would take off his sandal and give it to the other man. This was the way a contract was publicly approved in Israel." (Deut25:7-10)

"As **redeem** and **redeemer** have been key words throughout the book of Ruth let's look at the simple definition of what it means to redeem.

**REDEEM** To set free by paying a price.

# Are you beginning to see that Boaz is a type of Christ who is our ultimate redeemer?

37

What price did Boaz have to pay? (See verse 9)

### Day4

Who is the redeemer the women are referring to in verse 14? (Look back to verse 13)



How do the women refer to Ruth in verse 15?

**"The child, Obed was the real kinsman-redeemer**, a word that here has the broad sense of "deliverer" and "helper" (a hint of this meaning is already present in Ruth 3:9). Only through the child was the yoke of affliction that the Lord had laid on Naomi completely removed. It would be a great comfort to Naomi's old age to see Obed grow up and perhaps even to see his infant son, Jesse. Every time she saw her grandson she would be reminded of her own redemption. Her future was assured, so that her Moabite daughter-in-law was indeed better to her than *"seven sons,"* an example of hyperbole, which is designed to convey the highest praise"

The townspeople respond with a two-fold response, witness and prayer. They also pray for Boaz and Ruth. They first bless Ruth, in hopes that she, like Rachel and Leah, will be blessed of God and provide a son that will build up the people of God. Secondly, they bless Boaz, so that not only the name of Elimelech will be made famous, but also the name and line of Boaz. Thirdly, they bless the family, the house of Ruth and Boaz, so that their family line will be used mightily by God. [Brett W. Avants]

What does Isaiah 9:6 say and who is it referring to?

**2** Add to your biographical sketches of Ruth, Naomi and Boaz.

**Ruth became Boaz's wife** - Fruchtenbaum makes the point that "The ten years in Moab brought misery, but the few short weeks in Bethlehem brought blessing. Ruth's social progression was now complete.

- First, she was a nochriyah, meaning a foreigner (Ruth 2:10).
- Second, she was lower than a shiphah, a lower servant (Ruth 2:13).
- Third, she was upgraded to an **amah**, a **maidservant** (Ruth 3:9).
- Now, fourth, she became an iishah, a wife (Ruth 4:13)"

What did Naomi become to Obed?

# This basically means she became his "nanny." She would help nurture and raise him.

The name Obed means 'to serve / a servant who worships (God)' In his genealogy, who will he be the father of in verse 17 ? He is the father of and According to Matthew 1:16 he is the father of who is called the



### Day 5

Rahab the prostitute was Boaz's mother. (Mathew 1:5) Look up Hebrews 11:6, 31 and Romans 4:3-5 and marvel at God's plan. How were Ruth and Rahab saved? How are we saved?

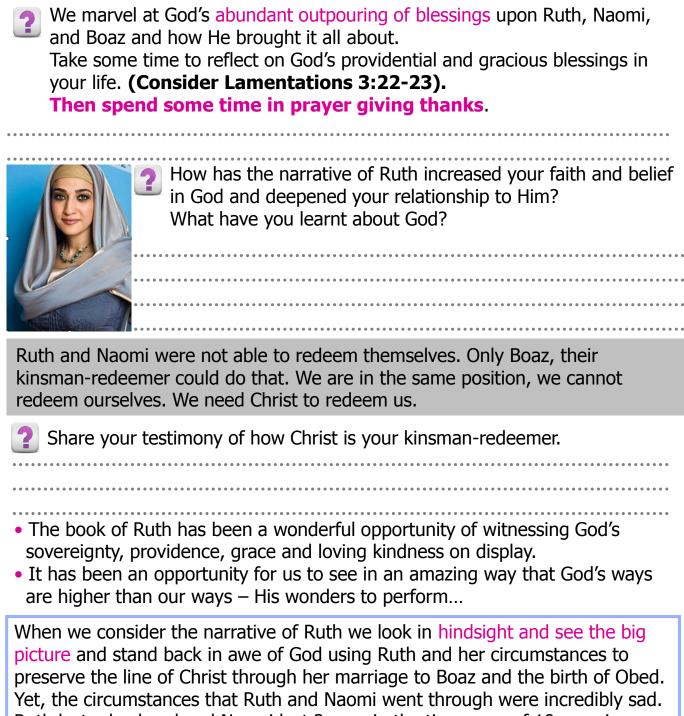
If you read the whole genealogy of Christ in Matthew 1, you will notice that only 4 women's names are mentioned: Tamar, Rahab, Ruth and Mary. Besides, Mary, the other 3 were pagans, and yet God saved them and they are mentioned in the line of Christ.

Doesn't this just show the amazing grace of God?

#### God's Law rejected her BUT God's Love redeemed her God's Law excluded her BUT God's Love embraced her

The story of Ruth points us to the big picture, the picture of Jesus Christ as our great Redeemer, who purchased us by laying down his life and shedding his blood for us. When life brings dark moments to us, we don't lose our hearts! There is always hope even in the darkness hours! Hope in Jesus for he showers us with his unfailing love in his redemption!

[Pastor Steve Kim – Cornerstone Mission Church www.cmclife.org]



Ruth lost a husband and Naomi lost 2 sons in the time span of 10 years!

As you consider this – take the time to fill in your own **spiritual timeline**: Start with your birth and then insert any significant miles stones, circumstances or experiences that have contributed to your Spiritual walk and how you have, in hindsight, seen God's sovereign hand and faithfulness at work in your life. (Keep adding to it)

### <u>My Spiritual Timeline:</u>

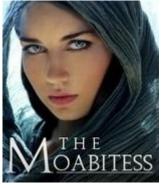
Read the following verses and answer the 5 W's and How on Christ as our kinsman-redeemer:
Luke 1:67-75 / Luke 24:21 / John 10:14-18Acts 4:12 / Romans 3:9-18,23-24 / Ephesians 1:7 / Phil.2:5-11 / Colossians 1:14 / Hebrews 2:14-15 / 1 Peter 1:18-19
Who redeemed us?
Who needs redemption?
Who alone can provide redemption?
What do we need redemption from?
Where did redemption take place?
When did redemption take place?
Why did Christ redeem us?
How did Christ redeem us?
Was Christ willing to redeem?

#### God has progressively unfolded His Biblical revelation to us. The Book of Ruth reinforces truth, points us to Christ, and also is part of the ultimate fulfillment of God's eternal purposes.

There are many themes that are explored in the Book of Ruth, but ultimately, Ruth is an enduring love story of how God takes care of his people through his grace and providence. Despite the bad decisions made by Naomi's husband and their sons, and to some extent by Naomi herself, God weaves all of these into his sovereign plan for their lives and for the lives of humanity.

As we look back over the characters, we saw that Naomi blamed God, yet was still faithful to God, even though she was bitter and depressed. Then again, if you lost your sons and husband, wouldn't you be a little bitter, too? Orpah took a pragmatic approach to life and decided to return to her Moabite family after the death of her husband. And who can blame her? Life in Moab was wellknown to her, comfortable, and certain. She could return to her own family and be taken care of, and probably even find another husband, so she takes the

practical and expected approach. On the other hand, Ruth, a believer in God for probably a short time, had faith that God would provide and made a covenant with Naomi that she would never leave her. She reacted with faith, and continued to make decisions based on faith. She took the extraordinary approach. But most important, God was at work behind the the scenes, and used all of their actions and reactions to His divine glory and according to His divine plans. By the end of the book, God has blessed the main characters in ways that



they can never imagine. At the same time, God has also blessed the world. [Adapted from Brett W. Avants' commentary, 'God in the Lives of Ordinary People']

### HARRIET TUBMAN

### **Freedom or Death**

**Born**: a slave in 1820 -- Dorchester County, Maryland **Died**: 1913 -- a free woman in Auburn, New York

"Harriet, I can't go no farther," my brother moaned as we ran through the darkened woods. "Just let me go back. I'll take the whipping and promise never to run away again."



I understood his fear. I'd seen it before and had even felt it when I first ran away from the plantation. "The good Lord will see us through, Jim," I reminded him. But poor Jim was so sure we'd be caught that he tried to turn back. I reached into my pocket and pulled out the shiny silver pistol I used when encouraging words weren't enough. "You gonna live free in the north or die right now in the south," I warned. I didn't like doing this, but there were too many people risking their lives for his freedom. Without another word, Jim turned and began walking north. I knew he'd thank me as all the others did once he tasted freedom.

#### **My First Job**

Day 6

Many years earlier, I was playing in the yard when Master Brodas called me to the big house. He was standing on the porch with a white woman who asked how old I was. Master Brodas told me to open my mouth. Seeing that my front teeth were missing, he guessed. "Five or six years old. As I told you," he continued, "she ain't house-trained, but you get what you pay for."

"I guess she will do," the woman said. She signed some papers and motioned for me to get on the wagon. My mind began to race. Where was she taking me? I had heard the grown folk whispering about how slaves were taken farther south, never to be heard from again. I wanted to jump off the wagon and run to the field where my father was working, but I knew I would be caught and beaten. At just six years old, I was being hired out to make money for the plantation.

No matter how hard I tried, I could not do as good a job as was expected. I was beaten and spat on. Once I ran away and hid, living with the pigs for two days, sneaking their food to survive. After being returned to the plantation, beaten and bruised, my momma warned me, "Child, now that you at hiring age, you better do a good job or they'll sell you south." Being sold south struck fear in every slave's heart.

Fortunately, my mother also told me I could call upon the Lord for help at any hour of the day or night. I would remember that during the many difficult times to come.

#### **The Brain Injury**

When I was only 13 years old, a friend warned me he was going to make a run for freedom. As the overseer tried to catch him, I jumped in the way to help my friend escape. The overseer threw a two-pound weight at him, but it hit me instead. I spent the next week unconscious on the floor of our cabin. It was many months before I could sit up or walk again. The weight left a permanent, two-inch gash in

Harriet asked the Lord to make Master Brodas kind or to kill him. When he died suddenly, Harriet was heartbroken that she had prayed such a thing. She pleaded with God to be swept clean in her soul.

my head. For the rest of my life, the injury made me black out when I least expected it. All the pain and suffering was worth it to help a fellow slave taste freedom.

#### **My Escape**

I was working at the far end of the field one day when a Quaker woman slowed her buggy and told me if I ever needed help, she would be a true friend. Years later, after Master Brodas died, I felt God telling me it was time to go. I'd heard a rumour that I was going to be sold the next day. That night I slipped out into the darkness and began to run. I found my way to the Quaker woman's house.

Slave children were not allowed to learn to read or even attend Sunday school Slave masters did not want them to learn about Bible heroes like Moses or Daniel. "I'm Harriet Tubman," I told her. "You told me I could come to you if I needed help."

"Thee was right to come," the Quaker woman said. She explained to me that the Underground Railroad was not a railroad with trains but a group of friendly folks who were willing to help runaway slaves reach the free north. Telling only my sister, I left immediately, running through the woods. Following the North Star, I crossed through streams and lakes to throw the barking bloodhounds off my scent.

At each safe house I was given a hearty meal and a bed to sleep in. My last stop was at the home of a shoemaker, who hid me in a secret room for two days. Early on Sunday morning, the sixth day after I had left the Brodas plantation, the shoemaker gave me clean clothes, a black veil to cover my face, and a new pair of shoes. He took me by carriage close to the Delaware-Pennsylvania border. He pressed a silver dollar into my hand and gave me a piece of paper with the word "Pennsylvania" written on it. "Thank you sir, and may God bless you for all your help to me," I said and began my final two miles to freedom. As I got near the signpost for Pennsylvania, I took out the piece of paper and held it up to the sign. The words matched! I was now breathing free air. No one would ever be able to whip or sell me again. I vowed never to return to the south. But as time passed, I began to feel very lonely for my family. I wanted them to be free too. I worked very hard and saved money so I could go back and help anyone who wanted to escape.

#### Postscript

Harriet Tubman was called the Moses of her people. She made 19 trips back to Maryland, leading more than 300 slaves to freedom, including her family. A \$40,000 reward was issued for her capture, dead or alive. She narrowly escaped capture many times, but credited God for rescuing her from her trouble and directing her daily.

[www.christianhistorytimeline.com]



# Marriage & family

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# Marriage & family

## Ancestry

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# Marriage & family

# Ancestry

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## **References to God**

In the book of Ruth we see the transcendent God immanently involved and active in the lives of His people. There are more than 20 references to God in Ruth and by looking at each one there is lot we can learn about who God is, His character and how He acts.

#### Look up each of the references and note what they say about God:

Ruth 1	
Ruth 1:6	
Ruth 1:8	
Ruth 1:9	
Ruth 1:13	
Ruth 1:16	
Ruth 1:17	
Ruth 1:20	
Ruth 1:21a	
Ruth 1:21b	
Ruth 1:21c	
Ruth 2	
Ruth 2:4a	
Ruth 2:4b	
Ruth 2:12a	
Ruth 2:12b	
Ruth 2:20	

### Ruth 3

Ruth 3:10	•••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••••
Ruth 3:13	

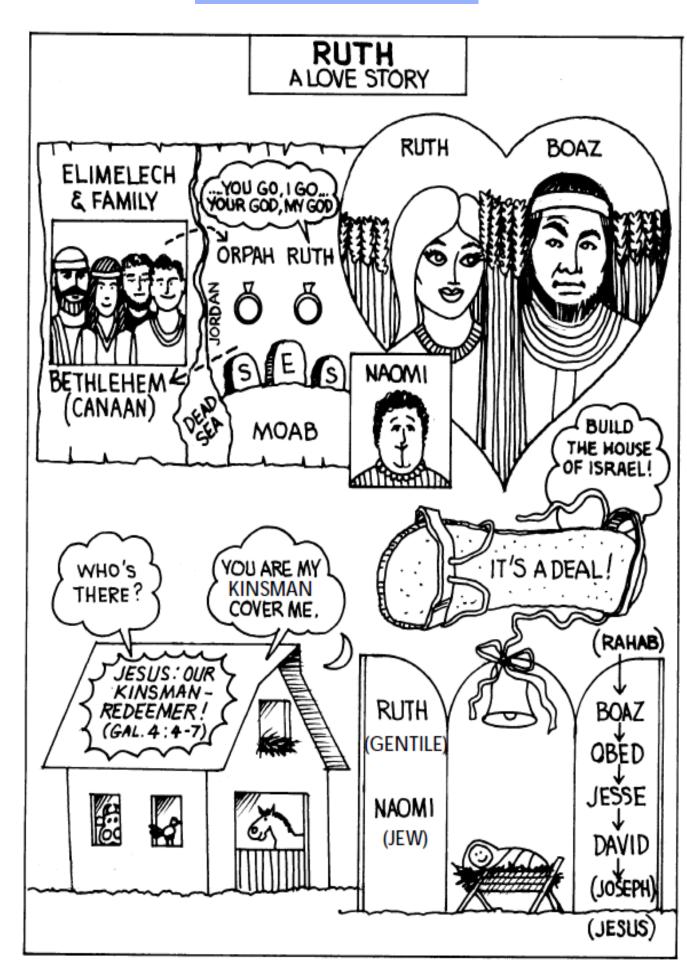
# Ruth 4

Ruth 4:12	
Ruth 4:13	
Ruth 4:14	

# From these references – how would summarise your view of God?

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**Appendix #5** 





I hope that after you have studied this beautiful little book of Scripture – a book that contains sadness, heartache, joy, trust and love – you have been humbled by the God who inspired this narrative and whose sovereign, providential hand was in every brush stroke of every event.

I am hoping that you are able to say with confidence, "This is the God that I serve," and can echo the words of the song: "Our God is an awesome God, He reigns from Heaven above, with wisdom, power and love, our God is an awesome God!"

The plan of redemption and theme of kinsman-redeemer outlined in the book of Ruth points us to Christ, our Saviour, our Redeemer. A plan that God had in place before the creation of the world. A plan to redeem a people for Himself – a plan to redeem you! You were bought at a a great price because God chose you and loves you, even when you did not deserve it.

Look to Christ for your joy, your hope and your salvation.

If you are one of God's children, He is sovereignly and providentially involved in all the events and details of your life, and whatever He allows to happen in your life is for His glory and for your good.

When you begin to doubt these truths, meet with your *Daughters* of Jerusalem so that they can encourage you, pray with you and keep you accountable and point you back to who God is and the Truth contained in His Word.

Keep growing in your knowledge and love of the Lord.

Yours in Christ,

Leanne