

The Book of Ruth - “Thy Redeemer Comes!”

INTRODUCTION:

The book of Ruth takes place during the times of the Judges. Peter Leithart in his book, *A House for My Name* says, “The times of the judges is a bad time for Israel. Priests and Levites are unfaithful, the people turn to idols, and the judges cannot keep Israel from lapsing back into sin. Because of her sins, the garden of Israel has become a place of death, strife, and slavery. But the story of Ruth shows that the Lord will restore all that Israel lacks.”

Ruth is a book of the faithful husband, Yahweh, and the faithless bride, Israel. The focus of Ruth is on the coming of the redeemer (Boaz) who rescues Naomi and Ruth from their poverty and barrenness. The book points forward to the coming of righteous king David, who will redeem Israel (in a sense) from the wickedness of the priesthood which culminated in Eli and his two ungodly sons, Hophni and Phinehas. It ultimately points to the coming of Jesus, the Christ who would fulfill the Law, redeem His people from their sins (their spiritual widowhood, barrenness and poverty), and rule over them in righteousness. Naomi is a picture of Israel, and the Lord’s mercy to widowed Naomi is a promise of mercy to His people. Ruth can be seen as a picture of the Gentiles, and her marriage to Boaz can be seen as the extension of the great *hesed* (Hebrew for “lovingkindness” or “mercy”) of the Lord to the nations.

Our emphasis in these lessons will be to help the students see the connection between the redemption of Naomi and Ruth via Boaz, and their own salvation via the Great Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Other themes in the book of Ruth that can be taught along the way include:

- 1) Life within the covenant of God and death outside of the covenant of God
- 2) The law of the levir (husband’s brother) for the preservation of the name and land of the deceased husband in Israel.
- 3) Biblical charity (via gleaning) involving the care of the poor, the widow, and the alien
- 4) Proper behavior before and during courtship
- 5) Proper employer/employee relationships
- 6) Proper conduct of public business

As you prepare your lessons each week, make use of the lesson plans to ensure that the major themes of each portion of Ruth are covered, but feel free to add insights from your own personal studies in the book as well. Pray for your students during the week, that the Lord might see fit to increase their knowledge of the book of Ruth and of the Redeemer, King Jesus, and to encourage them in their walks of faith with Him.

Some good resource materials you might consider using in your studies include:

- 1) Tape series on the book of Ruth by James Jordan – available from Biblical Horizons
- 2) *A House for My Name – A Survey of the Old Testament* - by Peter Leithart
- 3) *Judges/Ruth* – by Arthur Cundall and Leon Morris
- 5) *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament* – by David A. Dorsey
- 6) Matthew Henry's Commentary

May the Lord greatly bless you and encourage you in your times of teaching in the book of Ruth and may he impart grace to the students, as good soldiers in the Kingdom, to "...be doers of the word and not hearers only." (James 1:22). May they find that the Word of God indeed is "profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16)

Ruth - Lesson 1
Intro. /Outline & Chapter 1
Episodes 1-3:
Naomi Loses Her Family;
Ruth Chooses to Stay With Naomi;
Naomi and Ruth Arrive in Bethlehem, Destitute

❖ **Prayer**

❖ **Westminster Catechism**

❖ **Scripture Memory**

Ruth 1:16-17 - "...Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever 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 will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if *anything but* death parts you and me."

❖ **Introduction to Ruth** – Refer to the Introduction and briefly introduce the book of Ruth to the students

❖ **Outline of Ruth**

As Dorsey has pointed out in his book, *The Literary Structure of the Old Testament*, the book of Ruth is organized in a similar way to many modern stories and movies:

- 1) Introduction – 1:1-5 – Naomi loses her family
- 2) Body – 1:6-4:12 – God brings Naomi a redeemer
- 3) Conclusion – 4:13-22 – Naomi's family is restored

The account in Ruth seems to be made up of a series of seven major narrative units or episodes, set off by shifts in scene, time, characters, topic, etc.

- 1) Naomi loses her family – 1:1-5
- 2) Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi – 1:6-19a
- 3) Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, destitute – 1:19b-22
- 4) Ruth and Boaz meet – 2:1-23
- 5) Ruth proposes to Boaz – 3:1-18
- 6) Boaz redeems Naomi's property and marries Ruth – 4:1-12
- 7) Naomi's family is restored – 4:13-22

Our study of the book of Ruth will consist of 5 lessons. We will be teaching the seven “episodes” of the book in four lessons (combining “episodes” 2 and 3, and 6 and 7 into one lesson each). Lesson 5 will be a time of review and student evaluation.

❖ **Ruth Chapter 1:1-5**

Ruth 1:1 gives us the historical, spiritual, geographical, and economic context for the whole book:

a) Historical - The events of the book take place “in the days when the judges ruled”, and so is contemporary with the book of Judges. The fact that there was a famine in the land at this time may also point us more precisely to the time of Gideon and the famine that the Midianites brought to Israel through their destruction of the Israelite crops and livestock. (see Judges 6)

b) Spiritual - Being placed in the times of the judges, we ought to remind the students of the spiritual condition of Israel in the time of the book of Ruth by reading the last verse in the book of Judges: “In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in his own eyes.” (Judges 21:25) Thus, it was a time of rebellion and autonomy (self-rule) in Israel. As we said before, there was a “famine in the land of Israel”. The Promised Land is described many times in Scripture as a land “flowing with milk and honey”. Furthermore, the name “Bethlehem” means “house of bread”, so it should seem strange to the reader of Ruth that there would be a famine in Bethlehem in the land of God’s people. Nearly all famines among God’s people in Israel were as a result of their sin, and so it is probably safe to say that this too was a time of covenantal unfaithfulness on the part of the nation of Israel.

c) Geographical - We see that the main historical characters in Ruth are from Bethlehem, Judah, in the nation of Israel. Bethlehem was the city near where Rachel, the beloved bride of Jacob was buried, it was the birthplace of David, and of course was the future birthplace of Jesus. It says in verse 1 that an Israelite man and his wife and children travel from Bethlehem to Moab (pass map out to students). Though it may have been quite proper for the man to leave Israel during the famine (commentators vary on this point), it does seem strange that he would go to Moab. The Moabites were an idol-worshipping people descended from the sons of Lot (see Genesis 19), their primary god being Chemosh who demanded, among other things, the offering of child sacrifices (see Numbers 21:29, 2 Kings

3:26,27). It was Balak, king of the Moabites who tried to persuade Baalam to curse Israel. (Numbers 22-24). It was the Moabites who enticed Israel to commit harlotry with their women.

d) Economic - Verse 1 says that there was a famine in the land of Israel. As we have said, famines in God's land often were brought about by God as chastisement for Israel's covenantal unfaithfulness, this being particularly true in the times of the judges. Thus the family of Elimelech finds itself laboring under the hardship of this famine and Elimelech chooses to go to Moab. When the Israelites were traveling to the Promised Land and wanted to pass through the land of Moab, it was the Moabites who refused to give them food and water for their journey (Deuteronomy 23:3-4). And so, again, it ought to seem strange to the reader that a man would leave Bethlehem, the "house of bread", in the Promised Land of God to travel to the land of Moab and to an idolatrous people who historically refuse to give bread and water to God's people .

Ruth 1:2 introduces the family of Elimelech which consisted of the man himself, his wife Naomi, and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. The meaning of their names is interesting, and important to the theology of the book of Ruth:

Elimelech = "God is king"

Naomi = "Pleasant"

Mahlon = "Sickly"

Chilion = "Wasting away"

As we come to verse 3 we see that the Lord sees fit to end the life of Elimelech, though we are not told why. (Some commentators say that it may have been because of his sin of failing to remain in the Promised Land in spite of the famine and in bringing his family to such a wicked land. However, but because the Scripture doesn't say, we can only speculate.)

Mahlon and Chilion then take Moabite wives (Ruth and Orpah), (a questionable, if not sinful decision, unless they were already believers) and live in Moab another ten years, though neither of the families produced any children (v.4).

The name "Orpah" means – "a gazelle", or it can mean "stiff necked"

The name "Ruth" means – "friendship"

Mahlon and Chilion both become "sickly" and "waste away" (die) and Naomi is left without husband or children (v. 5), and Ruth and Orpah join Naomi in her widowhood. This is a picture of the nation of Israel who has been left widowed by her husband, Yaweh, because of her covenantal unfaithfulness. (Note: We are NOT necessarily saying that Naomi herself is widowed because of her personal sin). At this point, the Lord has emptied Naomi's life of all outward means of

provision and security and we can mourn with her in her loss. However, the Lord has not forgotten Naomi and will graciously redeem her from her state of need if she will but wait upon Him.

In verse 6, Naomi hears that there is again bread in the “house of bread” (Bethlehem) and in the land of milk and honey. Yaweh is again blessing His people...in the book of judges this often followed times of repentance on the part of Israel. And so Naomi prepares to leave, with her two daughters-in-law accompanying her. While they are traveling, Naomi tries to persuade Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab, asking that the Lord would grant them rest in the house of new husbands (verses 7-13). Naomi tells them that she is too old to have a husband, and to bear sons that could be husbands to Ruth and Orpah. She had become bitter in her soul and grieves over her loss by saying that “...the hand of the Lord has gone out against me” (verse 13). We can sympathize with Naomi in the loss of her husband and sons, and can understand her sadness. However, we might wish that she would have taken encouragement in the Lord and exhorted Ruth and Orpah to leave their wicked idols in Moab and go with her to the land and people of the one true God, Yaweh, and to enter into covenant with Him. They would have had to give up their family, their home, and their gods, but would gain life in the covenant of Yaweh, and eternal life as their reward.

Naomi persuades Orpah to turn back to Moab and she is never again heard from in the pages of Scripture (verses 14-15). We can sadly assume that Orpah died in her idolatry (she likely remained “stiff-necked” as the meaning of her name implies). Ruth on the other hand will not be turned back but, as her name implies, offers herself in “friendship” to Naomi. Ruth pledges herself to Naomi and to the Lord with the beautiful poetic words of Ruth 1:16-17 –

“Intreat me not to leave thee, *or* to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people *shall be* my people, and thy God my God: 17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but death part thee and me.” (Be sure and point out to the students the confession of faith that Ruth makes, and not just her pledge to Naomi)

At this point, Naomi stops trying to turn Ruth back to Moab and the two of them travel together until they come to Bethlehem. The city is excited at their return and the women say, “Is this Naomi?” possibly noting how much she had changed in appearance or countenance since leaving Bethlehem. Naomi tells them not to call her “Naomi” which means “pleasant” but to call her “Marah” which means “bitter” because, though she went out full (husband and children), she has come back empty (no husband or children). Naomi says that the Lord has testified against her

and has afflicted her. (Note: the name “Mary” comes from the same Hebrew word as “Marah”) It is difficult for Naomi to see that, though the Lord has indeed brought trial into her life, yet he loves Naomi and has great plans for her life. Naomi had left Bethlehem during times of great famine, and has returned during the time of the barley harvest, and she will yet taste and see that the Lord is good and that he has many blessings in store for her, not the least of which is Ruth herself.

❖ **Character** – Patience and faith in times of trouble - When it seems the God is bringing trouble and hardship into your life, wait on Him and He will deliver you from your trial, and will bless you.

Assignment – Read Ruth chapter 2 two times

Ruth - Lesson 2
Chapter 2
Episode 4: Ruth and Boaz Meet

❖ **Prayer**

❖ **Westminster Catechism**

❖ **Scripture Memorization**

Ruth 1:16-17 –“...Entreat me not to leave you, *or to* turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever 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 will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if *anything but* death parts you and me.”

❖ **Review Outline of Ruth –**

Three parts:

- 1) Introduction – 1:1-5 – Naomi loses her family
- 2) Body – 1:6-4:12 – God brings Naomi a redeemer
- 3) Conclusion – 4:13-22 – Naomi’s family is restored

Seven “episodes”:

- 1) Naomi loses her family – 1:1-5
- 2) Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi – 1:6-19a
- 3) Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, destitute – 1:19b-22
- 4) Ruth and Boaz meet – 2:1-23
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❖ **Lesson – Ruth Chapter 2**

At the end of chapter 1, we see Naomi in the depths of despair. Her first husband, Elimelech, having died in Maob, has left her destitute and without children (heirs) to care for her, to inherit Elimelech’s property, or to carry on his name. By her own testimony, “The Lord has brought (her) home again empty.” (1:21a). Naomi needs a second husband to redeem her (and so does Ruth). This should remind us that our first husband, Adam, by his sin, left all of us in a state of spiritual poverty, with no hope of an eternal inheritance (heaven) and without hope of a godly seed. Like Naomi, we too need a Redeemer, a second husband who will take us as his bride, grant us heaven as our inheritance and bring forth godly seed...generations

who will be brought into the marriage covenant with him. God has not left us without that second husband...the Lord Jesus Himself.

God has not abandoned Naomi either...for the first words of chapter 2 are, “There was a relative of Naomi’s husband...”. As we will learn in the next lesson, God’s law commanded that near relatives were to help the members of their own family if they became poor, widowed, or oppressed. This relative of Elimelech is described as a man of great wealth. The Hebrew word for “wealth” is “yada” which means “valor”. Boaz (for that is his name) is a mighty man of valor much as David’s mighty men of valor in the books of Samuel. The name Boaz means “in Him is strength,” and we will find him to be a man who is strong in the Lord. Boaz is such a man of strength that one of the pillars in the temple that Solomon will later build for God is named Boaz (1 Kings 7:21).

Ruth, too will be used of the Lord to redeem Naomi. She is a woman of great character as shown by her willingness to provide for Naomi, to whom she owes no natural care. She demonstrates her understanding of God’s law in regards to gleaning (Read 2:2). Exodus 23:10-11, Leviticus 19:9-10, 23:22, and Deuteronomy 24:19-22 all discuss gleaning as the Biblical means of providing for the poor. (Read Deut 24:19-24) Briefly gleaning was:

- 1) Private, working charity at the landowner’s expense
- 2) Discriminatory charity – the gleaners had to ask permission of the landowner and the landowner could refuse to allow any particular gleaner if he felt that he was not of the deserving poor.
- 3) Hard work for modest reward

Gleaning was a means of providing for those whom the Lord had placed in times of financial hardship and was in many ways superior to our current government welfare system.

Notice God’s providence in verse 3b: “And (Ruth) ***happened*** to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz”, who just happens to be a near relative of Elimelech. Boaz comes out to the field, blesses his workers as a priest would, and they return the blessing to him. When Boaz notices Ruth, he asks his foreman, “Whose young woman is this?” He is told that it is the Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from Moab, and that she has been a hard working gleaner (v. 6-7). Boaz, even at this early stage in the book, begins to act the part of the redeemer. He calls Ruth to himself, (Notice, he calls her “my daughter”...Boaz is likely considerably older than Ruth, see 3:10) exhorts her to glean only in his field, and pledges his protection of her (v.8-9). Ruth, being overwhelmed with his generosity falls on her face before Boaz and asks why she has been granted such favor. Boaz gives Ruth three reasons:

- 1) She has done much for Naomi, her mother-in-law
- 2) She has left her family, and her home to come to the land of Israel
- 3) She has left her gods (implied) to come under the wings of the Lord God of Israel

Ruth then asks for Boaz' continued favor, though she says that she is unworthy (i.e. she is a foreigner from a despised land of false gods). Boaz again demonstrates his commitment to Ruth and to Naomi in this early meeting by:

- 1) Asking Ruth to eat with him (v. 15) Ruth eats and keeps some back to give to Naomi. *Note the similarities between what Boaz, the redeemer, feeds Ruth (bread and wine vinegar) and our communion meal with our Redeemer, the Lord Jesus*
- 2) Instructing the young men to allow Ruth to glean even among the sheaves (v. 15)
- 3) Instructing the young men to let grain from the bundles purposely fall for Ruth to pick up (v. 16)

Indeed, Boaz is treating Ruth like family, and not like one of the gleaners!!

Ruth works until evening and gleans an unusually large amount of grain (an ephah was about 7 ½ gallons!). In verse 18-20, she brings this back to Naomi who, when she sees the abundance, immediately recognizes that someone has been especially generous to Ruth. She is even more surprised to find out that the man in whose field Ruth gleaned was Boaz, a near relative of Elimelech's. Naomi praises Boaz and the Lord for this great kindness (v. 20), and she instructs Ruth to stay in the field of Boaz to glean. Ruth stayed close to the young women of Boaz through the barley and the wheat harvest, and she continued use the blessings of Boaz to care for Naomi.

Note the similarities between Boaz, the redeemer of Naomi and Ruth, and Jesus, our Great Redeemer:

Boaz	Ruth	Jesus	Us
Calls Ruth to speak with her	Comes and confesses her unworthiness	Regenerates us, calls us to Himself, and saves us through the preaching of the gospel	Come to Him in repentance and salvation
Assures Ruth that she is welcome in his field because of her faith in the Lord and her good deeds done to Naomi as a result of her faith.	Praises Boaz	Assures us that we are forgiven and are now part of his bride	Worship Him in formal Lord's Day worship and in lives of praise lived throughout the week
Instructs Ruth to glean only in his field	Asks Boaz to continue his favor towards her, and obeys his request	Instructs us from His Word as our only rule of life	Pray to God for continued favor, and live lives of obedience to His Word

Feeds Ruth with bread and vinegar	Eats a meal with Boaz	Feeds us with communion	Eat the communion meal with Jesus every Lord's Day
Sends Ruth back full to Naomi	Goes home to Naomi	Sends us out into the world to take what we have received to the world	Live joyful Christian lives and take the gospel to all nations

[If there is time, you can also go through an Order of Worship and show the similarities between Ruth's encounter with Boaz and what we do every Lord's Day in formal worship:]

- 1) Call to Worship → Call of Ruth by Boaz
- 2) Confession of Sins → Ruth bows before Boaz confessing her unworthiness
- 3) Assurance of Forgiveness → Boaz speaks kindly to Ruth
- 4) Gloria Patri, Sursum Corda, Hymn(s) of Praise → Ruth expresses her thankfulness for the kindness of Boaz
- 5) Responsive Reading, Sermon → Boaz instructs Ruth to glean only in his field, and she does
- 6) Offering, Great Prayer → Ruth asks Boaz for his continued favor
- 7) Communion → Boaz serves Ruth bread and vinegar
- 8) Commission → Ruth goes home and shares what she has gleaned with Naomi

❖ **Character:**

- Ruth's care of Naomi teaches us a good lesson about working hard in order to care for those who are poor, aged, or unable to care for themselves (e.g. younger siblings, busy mothers, hard working fathers)
- Boaz' generosity in caring for Ruth and Naomi and the kind way in which he spoke with Ruth is a lesson to young men in how to interact with and guard and protect all women.

❖ **Assignment:** Read Deuteronomy 25:5-10 and Genesis 38 – The levirate (husband's brother) marriage, and Ruth 3.

Ruth Lesson 3
The Levirate Marriage and Chapter 3
Episode 5: Ruth Proposes to Boaz

❖ **Prayer**

❖ **Westminster Catechism**

❖ **Scripture Memorization**

Ruth 1:16-17 - "...Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever 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 will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if *anything but* death parts you and me."

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- 7) Naomi's family is restored – 4:13-22

In Chapter 2 of Ruth, Ruth begins to provide for Naomi by gleaning in the field of Boaz, where God had providentially led her. Here she meets Boaz, the owner of the field, and when he finds out who she is, he begins to treat her kindly and with much generosity. Boaz is a close relative (a kinsman) of Naomi's dead husband Elimelech, and as the story unfolds, we will see that Boaz will assume the biblical role of the "kinsman redeemer" for Naomi and Ruth.

In the covenant family of Yaweh, family members were supposed to take care of one another if they came into difficult circumstances. The close relative was to redeem the troubled family member under several circumstances (Hand out table to students). We can see that all of these circumstances in the natural have spiritual

applications to our condition apart from Christ and His great work of redemption in our lives as seen in the table.

Leviticus 25:23-34 says that the land in Israel was not to be permanently sold, because it belonged to the Lord. If someone came into hard financial times and sold his property in order to eat, his near relative (sometimes called the “kinsman redeemer”) was to buy the property back for him so that the land might remain in the same family and tribe. Leviticus 25:47-55 says that if, instead of selling his land, the impoverished brother sold himself as a slave to a foreigner, the “kinsman redeemer” was to purchase him back. If this person was murdered, this same relative, now called the “avenger of blood” was to try and chase down the murderer and execute him to bring justice on behalf of the family.

In like manner, Deuteronomy 25:5-10 deals with a widow, whose husband dies leaving no male heirs to his property and name. Read Deuteronomy 25:5-10
Deuteronomy 25:5-10

5 “If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*; her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.6 “And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.7 “But if the man does not want to take his brother’s wife, then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother.’8 “Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But *if* he stands firm and says, ‘I do not want to take her,’9 “then his brother’s wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother’s house.’10 “And his name shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal removed.’

This marriage of the brother to his dead brother’s widow is called a “levirate marriage” by Bible scholars. The word “levirate” has nothing to do with the tribe of Levi. It comes from the Latin word “levir” which means “husband’s brother”.

Take a few minutes to explain the basic flow of this special marriage and the sons which result from it (the dry erase board is nice for this):

e.g. Chris marries Sharon

Chris dies before any sons are born to Chris and Sharon

Chris’ brother, Scott, marries Sharon

Scott and Sharon’s first born son would be considered Chris’ son and would carry on Chris’ name and inherit Chris’ property.

Scott and Sharon’s second born son would be considered Scott’s first born son and would be in the place of the first born when it came to carrying on Scott’s name and inheriting Scott’s property.

NOTE TO TEACHER: The sections below on “Details of the Levirate Law”, and “Sanctions of the Levirate Law” are mostly for your own information, not necessarily to be taught in class.

Details of the Levirate Law:

- “If brothers dwell together in unity...” – would seem to be binding only on a brother who lives nearby
- “...and one of them dies and has no son...” – no need to marry the widow if there is already a son born to the original couple
- “...the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; - This was a command, not a suggestion
- “...her husband’s brother shall go in to her, take her as wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her.” – This was to be a genuine marriage. James Jordan says that bigamy/polygamy was probably not allowed
- “And it shall be that the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.” – Note the property is not named in these verses (it is probably presumed to be included). The main purpose for the levirate marriage seems to be the preservation of the **name** of the dead brother. Israel was to bear the name of Yaweh as a covenantal people, and the preservation of each family name (the seed) was in a sense the preservation of the name of Yaweh until such time as Jesus, the promised seed of the woman, comes. At His coming, all of his disciples now bear the name of Jesus (Christian), and so the preservation of individual family names becomes unnecessary.

Sanctions of the Levirate Law

- “But if the man does not want to take his brother’s wife,...” If the brother of the dead man is unwilling to perform his duty of the levir (husband’s brother), then the following is to occur:
 - 1) “...then let his brother’s wife go up to the gate of the elders...” – The wife is to act lawfully and bring the matter to the elders for judgment.
 - 2) “...and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband’s brother’.” – She is to bring charges against him...note the emphasis on the **name** again.
 - 3) “ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him.” – The elders job is first to investigate the validity of the charges, then, if proven true, to exhort the brother to do his duty. They are acting more pastorally at this point than judicially.
 - 4) “But if he stands firm and says, ‘I do not want to take her’, then his brother’s wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders...” – Again, lawful, public actions are taking place here.

5) "...remove his sandal from his foot,..." – The removing of the sandal may have been symbolic of the brother’s unwillingness to walk in the shoes of his dead brother. It could also be a form of a curse in that it now exposes his foot to the cursed soil. Jesus had his shoes (and the rest of his clothes) removed at his crucifixion. The Jews rejected Him as their levir, their true husband, their redeemer.

6) "...spit in his face,..." – Spitting in the face was a mark of disgrace in the Scriptures, and rendered one unclean (see Lev. 15:8, Job 30,10). It was also a reminder of our depraved condition (Matt 15:11 – "...what comes out of the mouth, this defiles a man."). Jesus, the true Husband mixed spit with soil and used it to heal a blind man (even his spit was holy) and yet He was spat upon during His trial, again showing the rejection of the people of Jesus as their levir.

7) "...and answer and say, ‘So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother’s house.’ And his name shall be called in Israel, ‘The house of him who had his sandal removed.’” The man who refuses to become the levir and raise up a name for his dead brother becomes the “nameless one”. His name is changed simply to “the house of him who had his sandal removed”. Jesus as the true levir, has redeemed his bride (the church) from her widowhood and poverty and has taken her to be His own. Because of this, He too has obtained a new name that will be with Him for all of eternity...”King of Kings, and Lord of Lords”! (see Rev. 19:16, Phil 2:9-11)

Men as Redeemers / Jesus, the Great Redeemer

<i>Circumstance</i>	<i>Law’s Provision</i>	<i>Spiritual Condition</i>	<i>Christ’s Provision</i>
Financial debt -Land is sold to pay debt.	Kinsman redeemer – buys land back	Sin of Adam and our own sin have caused us to owe a debt to God which is too much for us to pay and which has caused us to forfeit this earth and our reward in heaven as well.	Jesus’ death has paid the debt we owe to God and has purchased this earth and eternal life in heaven for all His elect people.
Financial debt – Person is sold into slavery to pay debt	Kinsman redeemer – buys relative back	Sin of Adam and our own sin have made us slaves to sin and Satan	Jesus’ death and resurrection has freed His elect people from their

			slavery to sin and Satan.
Relative killed	Avenger of blood – pursues killer and slays him	Sin of Adam and our own sin have made us dead in our trespasses and sins, and destined us	Jesus’ death and resurrection defeats sin, Satan and death
Widowed; No male children to carry on the name and inherit the property of the deceased husband	Levir (husband’s brother) – Marries widow; raises a son to inherit name and property of deceased husband	Adam, our first husband is dead; We are dead in sin and unable to bring forth godly children to carry the name of Christ and inherit eternal life.	Jesus, the second husband and the true Bridegroom marries his Bride (the church), and raises up godly children who carry the name of Christ and inherit eternal life.

In chapter 3 we will see that Ruth approaches Boaz to ask him to act as the redeemer of Naomi and of her and he agrees to do this. We will go into the details of their encounter in a minute, but we must ask ourselves, “Will the marriage of Ruth to Boaz be a levirate marriage?” (A. Not in its strictest sense). Why not?

- 1) Naomi is really the one who needs a levir to raise up a son who will carry on the name of Elimelech, and inherit his property (the property that would have gone to both Mahlon and Chilion)
- 2) But, Naomi is past the age of child bearing...her womb is dead. The child to continue the name of Elimelech will have to come by way of Ruth.
- 3) Boaz is not the brother of Elimelech (nor of Mahlon or Chilion for that matter) so he is under no obligation to marry Naomi, or Ruth.

Two other facts make the marriage of Boaz to Ruth remarkable

- 1) Boaz is probably old enough to be Ruth’s father and her willingness to marry him in order to provide for Naomi and preserve the name and property of Elimelech instead of going after man her own age again demonstrates Ruth’s godliness. (More on this later on in the lesson)
- 2) Ruth is a Moabitess. The Moabites were a despised people in Israel. This makes Boaz’ willingness to marry Ruth all the more amazing.

Because of all of this, the marriage of Boaz to Ruth is an even more wonderful and beautiful picture to us of Jesus, our Redeemer who was willing to take us as his bride. We will talk more about this at the end of this lesson.

Chapter 3 opens with a wonderful statement by Naomi. Having seen God's continued blessing of her through Ruth and Boaz, Naomi now concerns herself with the welfare of Ruth: "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may go well with you?", she says. This indeed is a "pleasant" word from the one who at one time wanted to be called "bitter". One of the best things we can do when enduring a trial is to give of ourselves to others. The word "security" in the Hebrew means "rest", and is essentially the same word which Naomi to try and convince Ruth and Orpah to return to Maob:

Ruth 1:9 "The LORD grant that you may find **rest**, each in the house of her husband." The rest or security that Naomi now seeks for Ruth is superior this in every way!

Naomi knows that Boaz is in a position to redeem them according to the Law of God. She reminds Ruth the Boaz is a relative (kinsman) of theirs and that he will be winnowing barley that night on the threshing floor.

A connection can be made between the work of Boaz and that of Christ (Hand out the table):

The Work of Boaz / The Work of Jesus as Seen in Ruth 3

Boaz	Jesus
Work consists of winnowing - Ruth 3:22 “Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, <i>is he</i> not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.	Work of redemption is called “winnowing” - Luke 3:17 John the Baptist said of Jesus - “His winnowing fan <i>is</i> in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”
Work is done at night – Ruth 3:22 “...In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight...”	Work of redemption done at night – 1) Betrayed at night – John 13:30 (Judas,) Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. 2) Arrested at night - Jesus said of his arrest - Luke 22:53 “...But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.” 3) Tried at night 4) Crucified at “night” - Luke 23:44-45 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵ Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.
Works, then eats and drinks - Ruth 3:3... <i>But</i> do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.	Eats and drinks with His disciples, then completes the work of redemption by drinking the cup of God’s wrath for His people - Matthew 20:22 “...Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”
Works, then rests - Ruth 3:7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain	Having completed the work of redemption, he rests at the right hand of the Father - Hebrews 10:12-13 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.
Ruth, the bride, comes as he is at rest – Ruth 3:7 “...he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.”	The risen Savior now draws His bride, the church, to himself – Revelation 19:7 “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Naomi instructs Ruth to prepare herself in three specific ways before going to ask Boaz to perform the role of the redeemer, as seen in verse 3:

- 1) Wash herself
- 2) Anoint herself
- 3) Put on her best garment

The language of these instructions are remarkably similar to that used of the Lord in Ezekiel 16 when he speaks as the Great Redeemer of Israel. (Hand out the table) It also ultimately speaks of the marriage of the Great Bridegroom Jesus, to His Bride, the church. Ruth is making preparations to be a bride!

Ruth’s Marriage to Boaz / God’s Marriage to Israel / Christ’s Marriage to the Church

Ruth's Marriage to Boaz – Ruth 3	Yaweh's Marriage to Israel – Ezekiel 16	Christ's Marriage to the Church
“Therefore wash yourself...” Ruth 3:3a	“Then I washed you in water; yes I thoroughly washed off your blood... Ezekiel 16:9a	We have been washed in the blood of the Lamb for the forgiveness of our sins (Revelation 1:5-6), and with water by the Word for our sanctification (Ephesians 5:25-27)
“...and anoint yourself...” Ruth 3:3a	“...and I anointed you with oil. Ezekiel 16:9b	We have been anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit who is a guarantee of our inheritance in heaven. (Ephesians 1:14, 2 Corinthians 1:21)
“...put on your best garment...” Ruth 3:3a	“I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk” Ezekiel 16:10	We have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ that we might forsake our own righteousness and stand in the day of judgment. (Isaiah 61:10)

Ruth is then to go to the threshing floor, notice the place where Boaz lies down to sleep, go to him, uncover his feet and lie down. Boaz will (apparently) understand this to be a proposal of a redemptive marriage and tell Ruth what she should do next. (Emphasize the fact that there is nothing inappropriate or unseemly in Naomi's instructions) In verse 5, Ruth demonstrates her willingness to obey not only Naomi, but the Lord as well, in proceeding with this proposal of marriage.

In verses 6-7, Ruth goes down to the threshing floor and after Boaz had eaten and drunk and his heart was cheerful (NOT DRUNK!), he lies down to sleep at the end of the heap of grain. At midnight, something (the Lord?) startles Boaz such that he wakes up and realizes that there is a woman at his feet. He asks, “Who are you?” and Ruth identifies herself and then proposes marriage to Boaz in a very poetic and interesting way:

Ruth 3:9 “Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.” This language is similar to that used by Boaz in praying for Ruth in Ruth 2:12 “The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, **under whose wings** you have come for refuge.”

God has taken Ruth under His wing and he is going to use Boaz as His earthly representative to make manifest this protection to Ruth and Naomi. Verse 9 can also be translated “Spread the corner of your garment over me...”. The covering of Ruth with Boaz’ garment is a picture of marriage, the two becoming one.

In verse 10, Boaz blesses Ruth for showing more kindness now than ever before, by not going after young men, whether rich or poor. To whom was Ruth showing “more kindness”? ...to Boaz? It seems as though Boaz is speaking of Ruth’s kindness **to Naomi** as he did in Chapter 2:11. His meaning seems to be that Ruth, being a young woman, would naturally look to men her own age as potential husbands. Boaz is likely much older than she as evidenced by:

- 1) He is likely the son of Rahab the harlot spoken of in Joshua 2 and Matthew 1:5
- 2) He refers to Ruth as “my daughter” in 2:8, and 3:10,11
- 3) He makes a point of stating that she did not go after young men (apparently contrasting young men with himself)

Ruth instead looked to the man who was in a lawful position to redeem Naomi and her property and the name of her dead husband Elimelech. This kind, unselfish act by Ruth does not go unnoticed by Boaz.

Boaz pledges to Ruth that he will do all that she requests (v.11) but that there is another relative of closer relation to Elimelech than himself (a fact that neither Ruth nor Naomi apparently knew??). Boaz asks Ruth to spend the night there on the threshing floor with him (most likely for her own protection, for it was now past midnight), and that if the near relative would redeem them, fine. But, if he would not, then Boaz would do it. Boaz swears to keep his promise by Yaweh Himself.

Ruth lay at the feet of Boaz (resting at the feet of the Redeemer...reminds us of Mary, the sister of Martha sitting at the feet of Jesus, listening to Him – see Luke 10:38-42) until morning and Boaz sends her home before full light so that Ruth’s reputation would not suffer from false rumor. (In those times, some Bible commentators say, prostitutes would frequent the threshing floors of the ungodly... a sort of pagan fertility rite) Boaz then sends a pledge of his promise back to Naomi with Ruth in the form of six measures (not ephahs – that would have been over 400 lbs!) of barley, and sent her into back into the city.

In verse 16, Ruth returns home and Naomi asks her a very interesting question. Though some translations read, “How did it go, my daughter?”, or “Is that you, my daughter?”, the verse literally means, **“Who are you, my daughter?”** Naomi knows it is Ruth who has come home. What she doesn’t know is whether or not

Boaz has agreed to marry Ruth or not. In other words, Naomi is asking, “Are you Mrs. Boaz, or are you still just Ruth...Who are you, my daughter?” Ruth tells Naomi what Boaz said and shows her his pledge of grain. Naomi then instructs Ruth to rest, knowing that Boaz, the redeemer will not rest until he carries out his work of redemption that very day. As the sinful yet betrothed bride of Christ we were powerless to redeem ourselves, but had to wait until our Redeemer finished His work of redemption on our behalf. Like Boaz, Jesus was under no natural obligation to redeem us:

1) He is not the natural brother of Adam; He is God, we are not.

2) We are a sinful bride, and in rebellion against our Husband

Yet, God was willing to become man (the second Adam) redeem His sinful bride, (“...while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.” Romans 5:8). This ought to make us joyfully grateful to Him, and to delight in our great salvation!

❖ **Character** – Children must follow the wise, godly instruction of parents as Ruth did (Naomi is like a mother to Ruth), and ought to demonstrate faith and patience as God accomplishes all of His purposes in us. We ought to live lives of joy and delight in thankful obedience to the Lord for His great salvation!

❖ **Assignment** – Read Ruth 4 two times

The Work of Boaz / The Work of Jesus as Seen in Ruth 3

Boaz	Jesus
Work consists of winnowing - Ruth 3:22 “Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, <i>is he</i> not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.	Work of redemption is called “winnowing” - Luke 3:17 John the Baptist said of Jesus - “His winnowing fan <i>is</i> in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”
Work is done at night – Ruth 3:22 “...In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight...”	Work of redemption done at night – 1) Betrayed at night - John 13:30 (Judas,) Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. 2) Arrested at night - Jesus said of his arrest - Luke 22:53 “...But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.” 3) Tried at night 4) Crucified at “night” - Luke 23:44-45 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵ Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.
Works, then eats and drinks - Ruth 3:3... <i>But</i> do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.	Eats and drinks with His disciples, then completes the work of redemption by drinking the cup of God’s wrath for His people - Matthew 20:22 “...Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”
Works, then rests - Ruth 3:7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain	Having completed the work of redemption, he rests at the right hand of the Father - Hebrews 10:12-13 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.
Ruth, the bride, comes as he is at rest – Ruth 3:7 “...he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.”	The risen Savior now draws His bride, the church to himself - Revelation 19:7 “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Ruth's Marriage to Boaz / God's Marriage to Israel / Christ's Marriage to the Church

Ruth's Marriage to Boaz – Ruth 3	Yaweh's Marriage to Israel – Ezekiel 16	Christ's Marriage to the Church
“Therefore wash yourself...” Ruth 3:3a	“Then I washed you in water; yes I thoroughly washed off your blood... Ezekiel 16:9a	We have been washed in the blood of the Lamb for the forgiveness of our sins (Revelation 1:5-6), and with water by the Word for our sanctification (Ephesians 5:25-27)
“...and anoint yourself...” Ruth 3:3a	“...and I anointed you with oil. Ezekiel 16:9b	We have been anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit who is a guarantee of our inheritance in heaven. (Ephesians 1:14, 2 Corinthians 1:21)
“...put on your best garment...” Ruth 3:3a	“I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk” Ezekiel 16:10	We have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ that we might forsake our own righteousness and stand in the day of judgment. (Isaiah 61:10)

Ruth Lesson 4
Chapter 4
Episodes 6 and 7:
Boaz Redeems Naomi and Ruth; Naomi's Family is Restored

❖ **Prayer**

❖ **Westminster Catechism**

❖ **Scripture Memorization**

Ruth 1:16-17 -

“...Entreat me not to leave you, *or to* turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever 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 will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if *anything but* death parts you and me.”

❖ **Review Outline of Ruth –**

Three parts:

- 1) Introduction – 1:1-5 – Naomi loses her family
- 2) Body – 1:6-4:12 – God brings Naomi a redeemer
- 3) Conclusion – 4:13-22 – Naomi's family is restored

Seven “episodes”:

- 1) Naomi loses her family – 1:1-5
- 2) Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi – 1:6-19a
- 3) Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, destitute – 1:19b-22
- 4) Ruth and Boaz meet – 2:1-23
- 5) Ruth proposes to Boaz – 3:1-18
- 6) Boaz redeems Naomi's property and marries Ruth – 4:1-12
- 7) Naomi's family is restored – 4:13-22

❖ **Ruth Chapter 4**

In Chapter 3, we saw God's great plan to redeem Naomi and Ruth from their widowhood, their poverty, and their hopelessness through Boaz begin to unfold. Remember, Boaz essentially pledged himself to care for Ruth and Naomi in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 formalized this commitment, with Boaz' acceptance of Ruth's proposal. In chapter 4 we will see the consummation of Boaz' commitment to act as both the kinsman redeemer and the levir to Naomi and Ruth. As Naomi said in 3:18, “...the man will not rest until he has concluded the matter this day.” Today we will be covering “episodes” 6 and 7:

- 6) Boaz redeems Naomi's property and marries Ruth
- 7) Naomi's family is restored

Ruth 4:1 says that Boaz goes up to the gate of Bethlehem and sat down there. He is apparently an elder in the city and has a place at the gate with the other elders where judgments are rendered and where important transactions are witnessed. The gate of the city is also the place where the elders either allow a person entrance into the city or deny them such access...it is a place of life and death...life (food, clothing and shelter) inside the city, and death (starvation, nakedness, and peril) outside of the city. This is a picture to us of life within the covenant of God, and death outside of the covenant of God. Boaz, as a law-keeper, goes to the gate of the city to see that Naomi, Ruth, and their descendants receive the life that is theirs under the covenant promises of God.

As Boaz is there at the gate, the near relative of Elimelech came by. The writer of Ruth doesn't tell us his name (and he remains "the nameless one" for the rest of chapter 4), but Boaz greets the near relative by name and asks him to sit down. He then takes ten of the elders and asks them to sit down as well so as to witness the conversation he is about to have with the near relative. Boaz then tells the near relative that Naomi is selling the piece of the common field of Bethlehem belonging to Elimelech. [Note, some translations render verse 3, "Naomi...has sold the piece of land" but the Hebrew conveys the idea of a future sale that is certain to occur, not a past sale of land that has already occurred.] Boaz says that he thought to inform the near relative of this fact in the presence of the elders so that he can lawfully redeem it if he wants to, and if he won't, Boaz is next in line to do so. At this point Boaz only mentions the sale of the land, giving the near relative the opportunity to act as kinsman redeemer only, and not as a levir (yet!). This may or may not have been a self-conscious strategy on Boaz' part. The near relative says that he will redeem the property.

In verse 5, Boaz informs the near relative that on the day he buys Naomi's property, he must also acquire Ruth as wife (the Hebrew literally reads, "you must also buy Ruth...") to perpetuate the name of the dead (Elimelech, Mahlon) through his inheritance. At this revelation, the near relative changes his mind saying that he cannot do it, lest he ruin his own inheritance. What did he mean by this? Perhaps he feels that he cannot assume the financial burden of both the land purchase and the care of Ruth (and Naomi?) Perhaps he did not like the idea of the land going to the house of Elimelech instead of to his own house Perhaps Ruth's being a Moabitess is an issue

Perhaps he is already married and feels that a second wife would bring strife to his household (to his inheritance?)

We simply do not know the detail of the near relative's reasons for changing his mind, but in verses 7-8, he hands over his right of redemption to Boaz via the taking off of his sandal and handing it to Boaz.

Note to teacher - In handing over his sandal to Boaz, the near relative is NOT receiving the sanctions found in Deuteronomy 25 for refusing to carry out the role of the levir:

Deuteronomy 25 - Levirate Sanctions	Ruth 4
The widow was to come to the elders in the gate	Neither Naomi nor Ruth are here present
The rejected widow was to pull off the sandal of the kinsman who refuses to perform the role of a levir	The unnamed kinsman removed his own sandal
The widow was to spit in the face of the derelict kinsman	The near relative does not have his face spat in
The man who refuses his levirate role was to have his name changed to “the house of him who had his sandal removed”.	The near relative undergoes no name change.

Moreover the passage simply states that the removal of the sandal in this case was a custom used “concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything.”

Though it was not sin on his part, this near relative is a picture to us of Adam, our near relative who did not redeem his posterity, but rather sinned and left us widowed and poor and hopeless. Boaz is then a picture to us of the true Redeemer, Jesus, who did what Adam refused to do...to redeem the earth and take a bride to Himself...His church.

[If there is time, it might also be pointed out how all of the people (parents, brothers and sisters, friends, even pastors) whom we count on to be godly examples to us, or to care for us, or to treat us right will one day let us down and even sin against us. Only Jesus will never leave us nor forsake us, and we ought to turn to Him when people sin against us, and not grow bitter against one another, knowing that we also sin and let people down too.]

In verses 9-10 Boaz asks the elders and the people there to be witnesses of his purchase of Elimelech’s (and therefore Mahlon’s and Chilion’s) land, and of his marriage to Ruth. He again states the purpose of his marriage to Ruth; “...to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate.” (Note again the emphasis on the name, not on the land). Boaz asks them all to be witnesses of these matters. All of the people there gathered along with the elders say (literally), “Witnesses!” They then pray for Ruth, to be fruitful (to have many children, or more specifically, sons):“The Lord make the woman who is among your house like Rachael and Leah, the two who built the house of Israel;”

Rachel is mentioned first, even though they are from the tribe of Judah (who was born of Leah). This could be because Rachel was the more beloved of the two wives or because Rachel had died and was buried near Bethlehem. They also pray that Boaz would prosper and be famous in Bethlehem and that his house would be like that of Perez (the son of the strange relationship between Judah and Tamar in Genesis 38) from whom most of the Bethlehemites likely descended. Genesis 38, by the way, has the best example of levirate marriages and it precedes the law of the levir in Deuteronomy 25.

In verse 13, Boaz then takes Ruth as wife and the Lord (apparently quite soon after) causes Ruth to become pregnant. Note again, the providence of God in opening Ruth's to bring forth a son to bear the name of Elimelech and Mahlon. The women of the city then speak to Naomi and bless the Lord for giving Naomi a redeemer, and pray that his name would be famous in Israel. And who is this redeemer? Is it Boaz? Look closely at verse 15 and you will see that they are talking about the son born to Ruth! He is to be the redeemer of Naomi. This reminds us that Jesus is both the second (and only true) husband of the bride (his people, the church), and he is also the son of the woman who will redeem his people from their sins. The women of the city also praise Ruth who loves Naomi and has been better to her than seven sons could be.

Consistent with the law of the levir, Naomi (in verse 16) then became a nurse (mother) to the child, since he is considered the first born of Elimelech. The neighbor women confirm Naomi's motherly status in verse 17 by saying, "There is a son born to Naomi." The comparisons between Naomi and Mary the earthly mother of Jesus are obvious.

Naomi	Mary
Unable to have children (too old)	Unable to have children (a virgin)
Child is conceived by the redeemer, Boaz	Jesus is conceived by the Holy Spirit
Child is said to be the redeemer of Naomi	Jesus is the Redeemer of the world

For reasons that are unclear, it is not Naomi, Boaz, nor Ruth, but the women of Bethlehem who name the child Obed, which means "servant".

The book of Ruth ends in a rather strange manner...with a geneology. This geneology ends with David. Why would this be? Some say it is related to David's family history. Deuteronomy 23:2 says "One of illegitimate birth shall not enter the assembly of the Lord; even to the tenth generation none of his descendants shall enter the assembly of the Lord. Perez was the illegitimate son of Judah and Tamar (as seen in Genesis 38). Count the generations and you will find that David

is the tenth generation from Perez. Some commentators have said that because Samuel is the likely author of Ruth, one of his main purposes in writing the book may have been to establish that David's anointing as king was a lawful act.

What we can say for sure is that the book of Ruth is a marvelous demonstration of the mercy and providence of God in redeeming His people. Though Israel (as pictured here by Naomi) consistently moved away from Yaweh into idolatry and sin, yet, as we have seen in the book of Judges, when they cried out to Him in repentance, God was merciful to forgive His people and to deliver them. God also demonstrates, through the person of Ruth, His compassion to all peoples. Ruth, a Gentile, is granted faith in Yaweh, she is led into the Promised Land, and her marriage to the redeemer Boaz, makes her a true citizen of the Kingdom of God. All of us, in a sense, are Naomis and Ruths. Apart from Christ we are like Naomi. We have been left widowed because Adam, our first husband failed to guard and keep his bride well; he sinned and left us without a true husband. In the flesh we are childless, unable to bring forth godly children due to our own depravity. Apart from Jesus we are like Ruth, foreigners from the covenant of God and idol worshippers, having no hope and without God in the world (See Ephesians 2:11-12). Like both Naomi and Ruth, apart from Christ we are poor and helpless in our sins and bound for the real poverty of Hell. In a word, we are dead. But, thanks be to God that we who had no hope, have been given the Hope of the World, Jesus Christ.

We can rejoice that our Redeemer, Jesus has come and he has drawn us to his field to feed on Him through faith. He has married us, we are able to bring forth children for His glory and we have been given the Holy Spirit who will keep us from unfaithfulness. Finally, our future is to be with Him forever in heaven where there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor pain, and where every tear shall be wiped away from our eyes. Let us all prayerfully strive to lives of thankful obedience to our great Redeemer.

❖ **Character** - We can all emulate Boaz in the way that he conducted himself in chapter 4:

- He kept his word to Ruth to and approached the near relative quickly after promising to do so
- He conducted this public business lawfully and in the presence of witnesses
- He was willing to sacrifice his own time and money to help Naomi and Ruth and to raise up a son for Elimelech and Mahlon

Assignment – Read the entire book of Ruth once more

Ruth Lesson 5

Review and Student Evaluation

❖ **Prayer**

❖ **Westminster Catechism**

❖ **Scripture Memorization**

Ruth 1:16-17 -

“...Entreat me not to leave you, *or to* turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever 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 will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if *anything but* death parts you and me.”

❖ **Review Outline of Ruth –**

Three parts:

- 1) Introduction – 1:1-5 – Naomi loses her family
- 2) Body – 1:6-4:12 – God brings Naomi a redeemer
- 3) Conclusion – 4:13-22 – Naomi’s family is restored

Seven “episodes”:

- 1) Naomi loses her family – 1:1-5
- 2) Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi – 1:6-19a
- 3) Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, destitute – 1:19b-22
- 4) Ruth and Boaz meet – 2:1-23
- 5) Ruth proposes to Boaz – 3:1-18
- 6) Boaz redeems Naomi’s property and marries Ruth – 4:1-12
- 7) Naomi’s family is restored – 4:13-22

❖ **Review of Ruth**

Our review of the book of Ruth will consist of a series of questions and answers to pose to the class, plus a few summary statements. It is designed to help to refresh their memories and to give them an opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of the book. About 5 minutes should be spent on each lesson and the teacher may pick and choose questions if time is short. About 10-15 minutes should be left at the end to give a summary of the whole book, make final connections of the story of Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz to the relationship of Yaweh to Israel and Jesus to the church, and answer questions. The student evaluation forms should then be passed out with the instruction given to fill them out at home and bring them back in the next week.

Lesson 1 – Introduction/Outline and Ruth 1 – Episodes 1-3: Naomi loses her family (1:1-5); Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi (1:6-19a); Naomi and Ruth arrive in Bethlehem, destitute (1:19b-22)

- The events of the book of Ruth take place at the same time as which book of the Bible? (Judges)
- What were those times like? (times of faithfulness followed by idolatry; “...everyone did what was right in his own eyes”, etc.)
- At the time of the book of Ruth, what hardship was Israel going through? (famine in the land)
- What was the usual reason for famines in the Promised Land, the land of milk and honey? (Israel’s sin)

In verse one we are told that there was man of Bethlehem who, in the midst of the famine, travels from Bethlehem to Moab.

What does the name “Bethlehem” mean? (house of bread)

- The name of the man was _____ (Elimelech) , his wife’s name was _____ (Naomi), and their two son’s names were _____ and _____ (Mahlon and Chilion)

- What do these names mean?

(Elimelech = God is king; Naomi = pleasant; Mahlon = sickly; Chilion – wasting away)

So there is a famine in the land of milk and honey and in the house of bread, and in the midst of the famine, Elimelech takes his family to Moab.

- Give me some reasons why going to Moab might have been a bad plan (Moabites were idol worshippers – Chemosh, child sacrifices; Moabites refused to give Israel food and water when they passed through Moab on their way to the Promised Land; Moabites led Israel into idolatry through intermarriage in the times of Baalam)

- In the course of time, what happens to Elimelech? (he dies). This leaves Naomi a widow

- Verse 4 says that Mahlon and Chilion then marry Moabite women named... (Ruth and Orpah). Is there any problem with this? (Israelites were not to marry Moabites...unless Ruth and Orpah were believers)

- What does the name Orpah mean? (gazelle, or stiff necked)

- What does Ruth mean? (friendly)

- Verse 4 says that Naomi, Mahlon, Chilion and their wives lived in Moab about ten years and then what happened? (Mahlon and Chilion both died)

So we finished Lesson 1 with Naomi having lost her husband, and her two sons

This is a picture of the nation of Israel who has been left widowed by her husband, Yaweh, because of her covenantal unfaithfulness. (Note: We are NOT necessarily

saying that Naomi herself is widowed because of her personal sin). At this point, the Lord has emptied Naomi's life of all outward means of provision and security and we can mourn with her in her loss. However, the Lord has not forgotten Naomi and will graciously redeem her from her state of need if she will but wait upon Him.

- Now in Ruth 1:6 Naomi hears that something has happened in Israel. What is it? (The famine is over and there is once again bread in Bethlehem (the house of bread)).

- So Naomi leaves Moab to return to Bethlehem and who goes along with her? (Ruth and Orpah)

- What does Naomi encourage Ruth and Orpah to do? (return to Moab)

- What reasons does Naomi give Ruth and Orpah for urging them to return to Moab? (to find rest in the house of their husbands; Later, Naomi tells them that she is too old to have a husband and sons, and that, even if she could have sons, Ruth and Orpah wouldn't wait for the sons to grow up so that they could marry them)

- Do you think Naomi should have encouraged Ruth and Orpah to return to Moab? Why or why not? (A life of poverty and singleness in covenant with Yaweh in the Promised Land is preferable to a life of wealth and marriage and children in idolatry in Moab)

- Do Ruth and Orpah return to Moab right away? (No, they initially both continue with Naomi, but Orpah eventually turns back to Moab)

In verse 15, Naomi again urges Ruth to return to her Moabite people and gods, but Ruth continues to travel with Naomi after speaking to her the beautiful words of Ruth 1:16-17 where she pledges herself to Naomi and to Yaweh.

- When Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem, the city was excited, and the women ask, "Could this be Naomi?" Naomi then tells them not to call her Naomi any more but _____ (Marah).

- Why does Naomi tell them to call her Marah? (Marah means "bitter" and Naomi says that the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with her.) Naomi is bitter that she has lost her entire family. It is difficult for Naomi to see that, though the Lord has indeed brought trial into her life, yet he loves Naomi and has great plans for her life. Naomi had left Bethlehem during times of great famine, and has returned during the time of the barley harvest, and she will yet taste and see that the Lord is good and that he has many blessings in store for her, not the least of which is Ruth herself.

❖ **Character** – Patience and faith in times of trouble - When it seems the God is bringing trouble and hardship into your life, wait on Him and He will deliver you from your trial, and will bless you.

Lesson 2 - Ruth 2 – Episode 4: Ruth and Boaz meet (2:1-23)

In Lesson 4 we covered episode 4, Ruth and Boaz meet, which is chapter 2 of Ruth.

- As Chapter 2 begins we are introduced to a relative of Elimelechs named Boaz, whose name means _____ (“in Him is strength”), and he is a might man of great wealth in Bethlehem.

- Ruth then asks Naomi to let her go and work to earn them their food. What type of work does she want to do? (gleaning). As we said before, the Scripture teaches that gleaning was God’s way of providing for the poor by allowing them to go into the fields after the reapers to pick up what was left behind. It was hard work for a little grain or fruit.

- Verse 3 says that Ruth happened to come to the part of the field belonging to _____ (Boaz).

- Boaz then comes out to the field, greets his workers and asks his foreman about Ruth. He then calls her over to himself and tells her to do what? (to glean only in his field, and stay close by the young women)

- Boaz then says that he has commanded the young men not to harm her. What is Ruth’s response to Boaz’ kindness? (She fell on her face and asks why she has found favor with him.)

- What was the reason that Boaz gave for being so kind to Ruth? (Ruth had been so kind to Naomi. She had left her family and home to come to Bethlehem). He then prays that the Lord, under whose wings Ruth has taken refuge, would reward her for her kindness. Ruth then asks that she would continue to find favor with Boaz.

- Later, Boaz asks Ruth to eat with her and he gives her _____ and _____. (bread and vinegar – wine)

- What does this remind us of? (Communion)

- Boaz then commanded his young men to let Ruth glean even among the sheaves and to leave grain for her on purpose. What does this tell us about Boaz plan? (He plans to act as the redeemer of Naomi and Ruth, and perhaps the levir too.)

- Ruth gleaned about an ephah of barley (about 7 ½ gallons) and took it home to Naomi. Naomi praises God when she learns that Ruth has gleaned so much and that she has gleaned in the field of Boaz, whom she remembers to be one of Elimelech’s close relatives. She instructs Ruth to continue to glean only in his field.

❖ Character:

- Ruth’s care of Naomi teaches us a good lesson about working hard in order to care for those who are poor, aged, or unable to care for themselves (e.g. younger siblings, busy mothers, hard working fathers)

- Boaz' generosity in caring for Ruth and Naomi and the kind way in which he spoke with Ruth is a lesson to young men in how to interact with and guard and protect all women.

Lesson 3 – The levirate marriage – Deuteronomy 25:5-10, Genesis 38 and Ruth 3 – Episode 5: Ruth Proposes to Boaz

In Lesson 3 we learned about a special kind of marriage...the levirate marriage.

- What does the word "levir" mean (husband's brother)
- According to Deuteronomy 25, what is the duty of the husband's brother if the husband dies, leaving no sons? (He was to marry the widow. Their firstborn male child would be considered the dead husband's son and would carry on the name of the dead husband and inherit his property)
- *(Note to teacher – go over this part only if you covered the details and sanctions of the levirate marriage in Lesson 3)* - What was to happen if the husband's brother refuses to perform his duty as a levir? (The widow was to go to the elders at the gate and tell him that the husband's brother refuses to perform his duty as a levir; The elders are to exhort the husband's brother to do his duty but, if he refuses, the brother's wife is to remove his sandal, spit in his face and say, "So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house." The brother's name shall then be called, "The house of him who had his sandal removed.")
- Was the marriage of Ruth to Boaz a levirate marriage? (Not strictly speaking)
- Why or why not? (Boaz was not Elimelech's brother and so was not obligated to perform the role of the levir)

Chapter 3 brought us to the fifth episode in the book of Ruth - Ruth proposes to Boaz. Naomi now seeks security for Ruth, not back in pagan Moab, but in the person of the redeemer, Boaz. She sends Ruth to Boaz who was to be threshing barley that night.

- What does Naomi tell Ruth to do before she goes to Boaz and asks him to be their redeemer? (to wash and anoint herself, and put on her best garment)
- Naomi tells Ruth to wait for Boaz to finish eating and drinking and to notice the place where Boaz lies down, and then do what? (uncover his feet and lie down). Boaz would then tell Ruth what she should do.
- Ruth does these things and, during the night, Boaz is awakened, notices a woman at his feet, and asks who it is. Ruth tells him it is she then asks him to do something. What? (Take her under his wing, or spread the corner of his garment over her)
- What does she mean by this? (She is asking Boaz to marry her and to act as the redeemer for her and Naomi)

- Boaz then praises Ruth for this kindness shown to Naomi by asking him to marry her and not going after what kind of men? (young)
 - He then agrees to marry her but says that one thing stands in the way. What is it (There is another relative who is a closer relation to Elimelech than he is) If the near relative does not want to perform the duty, then Boaz promises that he will do it.
 - What does Boaz then do to protect Ruth and her reputation (He has her stay until morning and then sends her home before daybreak so that no one will know she has been to the threshing floor.)
 - What does Boaz send with Ruth as a pledge that he will keep his promise to her? (He filled her shall with grain to bring back to Naomi.)
 - As Ruth returns home, Naomi asks her a question. What is it (“Who are you, my daughter?”)
 - What does Naomi mean by this? (“Are you Mrs. Boaz, or are you still just Ruth?”)
- Naomi then instructs Ruth to sit still and wait for Boaz to act upon his vow.

❖ **Character** – Children must follow the wise, godly instruction of parents as Ruth did (Naomi is like a mother to Ruth), and ought to demonstrate faith and patience as God accomplishes all of His purposes in us. We ought to live lives of joy and delight in thankful obedience to the Lord for His great salvation!

Lesson 4 - Ruth 4 – Episodes 6 and 7 - Boaz redeems Naomi’s property and marries Ruth (4:1-12), and Naomi’s family is restored (4:13-22)

Our last lesson in Ruth covered chapter 4 and episodes six and seven in the book of Ruth [read lesson titles and Scripture addresses] The day after he agreed to marry Ruth, Boaz goes up to the gate of the city and sat down. He sees the near relative coming and asks him to sit down.

- Boaz then asks ten elders of the city to sit down and they do so as well. Why does he do this? (so that the elders can act as witnesses to the conversation he is about to have with the near relative)
- After Boaz tells the near relative that he is first in line to redeem Elimelech’s property from Naomi, what is the near relatives response? (He says that he will redeem it)
- What changed his mind? (The discovery that he would have to marry Ruth as well, to raise up a son for Elimelech/Mahlon.)
- What reason did the near relative give for not wanting to both redeem the property and marry Ruth? (He said it would ruin his own inheritance)
- To show that he was giving up his right of redemption, what did the near relative do? (He took off his sandal and handed it to Boaz saying, “Buy it for yourself.”)

Boaz then asks for the elders and all the people to act as witnesses of his intention to buy Elimelech's property and marry Ruth.

- The women of the city then bless Ruth and ask the lord to make her like whom? (Rachel and Leah). They also ask God's blessing on Boaz. The Lord blesses Boaz and Ruth and Ruth gives birth to a son.

- The women of Bethlehem then praise God for providing Naomi with a close relative. Who are they talking about? (The baby)

- Whose son is the child considered to be? (Naomi's and Elimelech's. The women said in verse 17, "There is a son born to Naomi.")

- Who is considered the redeemer of Naomi in Chapter 4 (the baby)

- How can you explain this? (The baby will carry the name of Elimelech and inherit his property – Jesus is both the second husband who would redeem the world, and the seed born of the woman who would crush the head of Satan.)

- What did the women name the baby? (Obed)

- Obed was the grandfather of what great king in Israel? (David)

- Why do some Bible scholars think that the genealogy on Ruth 4:18-22 is placed at the end of the book of Ruth? (To legitimize the anointing of David as king over Israel. David is of the tenth generation from the illegitimate birth of Perez, and so is of the first generation eligible to be a citizen in Israel and so to be anointed as King.)

❖ **Character** - We can all emulate Boaz in the way that he conducted himself in chapter 4:

- He kept his word to Ruth to and approached the near relative quickly after promising to do so

- He conducted this public business lawfully and in the presence of witnesses

- He was willing to sacrifice his own time and money to help Naomi and Ruth and to raise up a son for Elimelech and Mahlon

So we have seen that the book of Ruth is indeed a great book of redemption, and a demonstration of the *hesed*, or loving kindness and mercy of God. From Ruth we can see God's redemption through Boaz of Elimelech and Naomi, and of Mahlon. This is a picture to us of the redemption of Israel (via David), and of the Gentiles as well. We can then make application to our redemption through the person and work of Jesus Christ as well.

Name as many examples as you can from the book of Ruth of how Naomi and Ruth are types of the bride of Christ and how Boaz was a type of Christ:

- Adam, our first husband sinned (died) leaving his "bride" (all his posterity)

widowed and unable to bring forth godly seed. He left his descendants in need of a second husband to marry her and to raise up godly children to worship the Father.

That second husband is Yaweh, and ultimately Jesus. Naomi, representing Israel, and Ruth, a picture of the Gentiles, lost their first husbands, and Boaz became the second husband to redeem them both.

- Boaz is a near relative to Elimelech – Jesus came to earth as a man, the second Adam

- In Chapter 2 we saw many comparisons between Boaz and Jesus:

Boaz	Ruth	Jesus	Us
Calls Ruth to speak with her	Comes and confesses her unworthiness	Regenerates us, calls us to Himself, and saves us through the preaching of the gospel	Come to Him in repentance and salvation
Assures Ruth that she is welcome in his field because of her faith in the Lord and her good deeds done to Naomi as a result of her faith.	Praises Boaz	Assures us that we are forgiven and are now part of his bride	Worship Him in formal Lord's Day worship and in lives of praise lived throughout the week
Instructs Ruth to glean only in his field	Asks Boaz to continue his favor towards her, and obeys his request	Instructs us from His Word as our only rule of life	Pray to God for continued favor, and live lives of obedience to His Word
Feeds Ruth with bread and vinegar	Eats a meal with Boaz	Feeds us with communion	Eat the communion meal with Jesus every Lord's Day
Sends Ruth back full to Naomi	Goes home to Naomi	Sends us out into the world to take what we have received to the world	Live joyful Christian lives and take the gospel to all nations

- In chapter 3 we again saw comparisons between the work of Boaz and the work of Jesus:

The Work of Boaz / The Work of Jesus as Seen in Ruth 3

Boaz	Jesus
Work consists of winnowing - Ruth 3:22 “Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, <i>is he</i> not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.	Work of redemption is called “winnowing” – Luke 3:17 John the Baptist said of Jesus - “His winnowing fan <i>is</i> in His hand, and He will thoroughly clean out His threshing floor, and gather the wheat into His barn; but the chaff He will burn with unquenchable fire.”
Work is done at night – Ruth 3:22 “...In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight...”	Work of redemption done at night – 1) Betrayed at night – John 13:30 (Judas,) Having received the piece of bread, he then went out immediately. And it was night. 2) Arrested at night - Jesus said of his arrest – Luke 22:53 “...But this is your hour—when darkness reigns.” 3) Tried at night 4) Crucified at “night” - Luke 23:44-45 Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. ⁴⁵ Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two.
Works, then eats and drinks - Ruth 3:3... <i>But</i> do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking.	Eats and drinks with His disciples, then completes the work of redemption by drinking the cup of God’s wrath for His people – Matthew 20:22 “...Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”
Works, then rests - Ruth 3:7 And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain	Having completed the work of redemption, he rests at the right hand of the Father - Hebrews 10:12-13 But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, ¹³ from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool.
Ruth, the bride, comes as he is at rest – Ruth 3:7 “...he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.”	The risen Savior now draws His bride, the church, to himself – Revelation 19:7 “Let us be glad and rejoice and give Him glory, for the marriage of the Lamb has come, and His wife has made herself ready.”

Ruth's Marriage to Boaz / God's Marriage to Israel / Christ's Marriage to the Church

Ruth's Marriage to Boaz – Ruth 3	Yaweh's Marriage to Israel – Ezekiel 16	Christ's Marriage to the Church
“Therefore wash yourself...” Ruth 3:3a	“Then I washed you in water; yes I thoroughly washed off your blood... Ezekiel 16:9a	We have been washed in the blood of the Lamb for the forgiveness of our sins (Revelation 1:5-6), and with water by the Word for our sanctification (Ephesians 5:25-27)
“...and anoint yourself...” Ruth 3:3a	“...and I anointed you with oil. Ezekiel 16:9b	We have been anointed with the oil of the Holy Spirit who is a guarantee of our inheritance in heaven. (Ephesians 1:14, 2 Corinthians 1:21)
“...put on your best garment...” Ruth 3:3a	“I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk” Ezekiel 16:10	We have been clothed with the righteousness of Christ that we might forsake our own righteousness and stand in the day of judgment. (Isaiah 61:10)

- In chapter 4, the near relative is unable to redeem the property of Elimelech and marry Ruth (and Naomi). Boaz, who is under no obligation to do so, does both. Adam was unable to guard and keep his bride (Eve/us) and is thrown out of the land. Jesus is not our closest relative in the flesh, and so is under no obligation to redeem the world and marry His bride, but, out of His great love and mercy, He chooses to do so. Only Jesus is able to redeem the world and marry His bride the church.

Pass out the Student Evaluation forms and ask the children to fill them out and to bring them back next week.

Ruth – Student Evaluation

1) Ruth 1:16-17 - _____ me not to _____ thee, *or* to return from _____ after thee: for _____ thou goest, I will go; and where thou _____, I will lodge: thy _____ *shall be* my _____, and thy _____ my _____: 17 Where thou diest, will I _____, and there will I be _____: the _____ do so to me, and more also, *if ought* but _____ part thee and me.

2) Write the three part outline of Ruth:

3) The book of Ruth takes place during the times of the _____, when there was a _____ in the land.

4)

True or False – Elimelech means “Molech is king”

True or False – Bethlehem means “house of bread”

True or False – Chilion means “wasting away”

True or False – Mahlon means “wasting away”

True or False – Naomi means “pleasant”

5) When Naomi and Ruth returned to Bethlehem, Naomi told the women there to call her _____ which means _____.

6) Ruth gleaned in the field of _____, who was a relative of Elimelech.

7) Name two things that Boaz did for Ruth when they first met (Chapter 2), that were early indications that he intended to take care of her and Naomi.

8) Name three things that Ruth did to prepare herself before going to Boaz and asking him to marry her (Chapter 3).

9) In Chapter 3 Boaz said that he would marry Ruth if... (circle the best answer below)

a) Naomi approved of the marriage

c) Ruth became a believer in Yaweh

b) The near relative refused to marry her

d) Ruth would agree to marry Boaz

10) Name three ways that Boaz was like Jesus
