

SERIES: BOOK OF RUTH  
“Boaz”  
Ruth 2:1

Most of you know that our son Josh is an employee of Stanford University working at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Institute. This weekend is, of course, a big weekend for the Institute. The other night I called him and found him just cleaning up after a presentation about Martin Luther King, Jr. to about 150 people. He said they were heading out for a staff dinner. He sounded excited. After dinner he called and the sound in his voice was one of awe and wonder. Later, he was telling us that he sat across the table from and was talking with the man who was with Dr. King when he was shot. This man had invited Dr. King to dinner at his house. They had been standing on the balcony. The man turned to lead the way into the house for dinner when he heard a shot, turned, and saw Dr. King slump to the floor, dead. Since others were asking this man about that event, Josh asked him other questions. Josh found out that this man has been the pastor of his Baptist church in Memphis since 1959, that's 50 years! Josh asked, “how do you preach in a church for that long?” The man's answer was short and simple, “the message is about one person. He doesn't change, so the message doesn't change.” By the end of this whole day of events and people, Josh was in awe and amazement. He had been in the company of some amazing people.

This morning I want us to spend some time with an amazing man. I want to introduce you to one wise, wealthy, wonderful man. He is almost unknown in today's Christian circles. Yet, his impact was felt for over five generations. He is the great-great grandfather of the wisest king to ever live, Solomon. Do you know his name? It is Boaz. We are introduced to him in the book of Ruth, chapter 2, verse one. Turn there with me. READ RUTH 2:1. We will stroll through the rest of the book and learn about this man. What we learn can influence our lives.

We will view the portrait of Boaz, as the person, the pillar, and the picture.

#### I. BOAZ, THE PERSON OF PROMINENCE.

The first chapter of the book of Ruth is a very sad chapter indeed. It contains nothing but backsliding and death. No wonder! The chapter never so much as names Boaz, the mighty kinsman-redeemer. Happily, Boaz is introduced in ... chapter 2, and from then on all the emphasis is on him. From then on all is well. His name is mentioned 20 times, ten times in chapter 2 and ten more times in chapters 3 and 4...<sup>1</sup> compared to a total of 12 times for the name Ruth in the whole book. He comes before us as a man “strong in grace, integrity, and purpose”.<sup>2</sup> Let's see what we find out about this man.

1. He is a kinsman, somebody in the family. Naomi had a kinsman of her husband. The word *kinsman* primarily means *known, well-known, acquainted, or an acquaintance* (see Job 19:14; Ps. 55:13; 88:8, 18).<sup>3</sup> He is something like a famous uncle on the dad's side of a large family.

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<sup>1</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring People of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2; Grand Rapids, MI. Kregel Publications, 2006, pp. 79-80.

<sup>2</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All The Men of the Bible*, p. 79

<sup>3</sup>*The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth*. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (29). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

According to the Law of the Old Testament, a kinsman had a threefold function in their system:

A. In the case of *manslaughter* the kinsman was to produce justice by avenging the blood of the wrongfully killed. This is where an “eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth” set the limits on the avenger. He could not exceed the wrong.

B. In the case of *marriage* the kinsman had the responsibility for his brother’s widow. If there were no children in his dead brother’s family the kinsman was to marry the widow and have children. These children would be treated as belonging to the deceased and would inherit the property of the one who would have been their father, had he lived.

C. In the case of *misfortune* the kinsman had to watch for the forced sale of the impoverished relative’s property and purchase it himself in order to keep it in the family.<sup>4</sup>

2. **He is a man of great wealth.** This friend of Naomi on her husband’s side is said, in the King James’s version, to be **a mighty man of wealth.**<sup>5</sup> It is the expression that is so frequently translated “a mighty man of valour” (see Josh. 1:14; 6:2; 8:3; 10:7; Judges 6:12; 11:1, &c.). In only one other passage, 2 Kings 15:20, is it translated as it is by King James’s translators in the passage.... before us.<sup>6</sup> Some translate it as “a valiant hero.” One man says “he had distinguished himself in the conflicts of Israel with their enemies.” The expression originally means “strong in strength”<sup>7</sup> The word is not applied to wild battle-rage, but to moral strength, which valiantly repels distress and dishonor....

[FULLER: “This first verse presents us with two remarkable things: 1. Poor Naomi was allied to powerful Boaz. 2. Boaz was both a powerful man and a godly man.”—TR.]<sup>8</sup>  
However this man had distinguished himself; he had become wealthy and very well respected in the community.

3. **His name is Boaz.** His name means *In Him (the Lord) is strength. Come in strength; strength!; fleetness.*<sup>9</sup>

Boaz’ name appears in the honored seventh place in the ten-name royal line of David (Ruth 4:18–22). He is also listed in the royal lineage of David by the Chronicler (1 Chron 2:11–15). Because of his relationship to the Davidic house, he is in the ancestral line of Jesus (Matt 1:5 [Boes]; Luke 3:32 [cf. LXX Boos, Booz]).<sup>10</sup>

4. **Some of his characteristics:**

A. **He is good businessman,** 2:4. He is involved in his business. He knows how to make and manage money. He manages manpower effectively. He comes to the fields and the

<sup>4</sup> See John Phillips, p. 80. I have used a lot of his material for this message.

<sup>5</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (29). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (29). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc. <sup>6</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (29). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Cassell, P., & Steenstra, P. H. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures : Book (26).* Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). *The exhaustive dictionary of Bible names* (43). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos. LXX Septuagint

<sup>6</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (30). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>6</sup> Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary.* Includes index. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

<sup>7</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (29). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>8</sup> Lange, J. P., Schaff, P., Cassell, P., & Steenstra, P. H. (2008). *A commentary on the Holy Scriptures : Book (26).* Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, S., & Cornwall, J. (1998). *The exhaustive dictionary of Bible names* (43). North Brunswick, NJ: Bridge-Logos. LXX Septuagint

<sup>10</sup> *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth.* 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (30). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc.

threshing floor. He spends time with his workers. He knows them. He works with them. He has a good report with them. He has order among his workers (v. 5) and they seem to know and respect him.

**B. He is a godly man**, v. 4. He acknowledges God as seen in his greeting of his workers and the blessing he gives to Ruth, v. 12.

**C. He has good people skills**. He interacts with his workers and everyone else he meets in the book, and especially Ruth, with civility, kindness, and propriety [conformity to what is socially acceptable in conduct or speech; fear of offending against conventional rules of behavior esp. between the sexes; follows the customs and manners of polite society<sup>11</sup>]. Someone penned these words: *The law of kindness was on his lips; and while benevolence was beaming from his countenance, piety was ruling within his heart. He said to the reapers, Yahveh be with you! And they said to him, Yahveh bless thee!* Courtesy met courtesy. It is a charming scene, and we may reasonably assume that there was reality in the salutations. Such civilities of intercourse between proprietors and their labourers are still... common in the East.<sup>12</sup> When he speaks with Ruth, vs. 8-9, you can sense the kindness and gentleness of this man. Notice how comforted and comfortable Ruth is after speaking with him, v. 13.

**D. He is observant**, 2:5. *Whose young woman is this?* He noticed when something was unusual. He didn't just walk up, talk with the foreman for a minute, and walk off. He looked around, he noticed how the work was going, and he also noticed someone new on the job site. I'm sure the fact that she was pretty helped his powers of observation, but he noticed when things were a bit different.

**E. He is generous**. All through the rest of the story, you learn of his generosity to others. He provides creature comforts to his workers, extra grain to this gleaner (v. 15), and spends considerable money on property he didn't need.

**F. He is informed about the community**. When Ruth is identified, he nods in understanding of the situation. He has heard and knows the details (v. 11). He is aware of what is going on in his community.

**G. He is conscientious about the law**, 3:12. He knows the requirements of the law and how to best work within the system of legal custom, 4:1. One man summarizes the legal aspect: Boaz functions in the story as an example of covenant fidelity and God's reward for faithfulness. A relative closer to Elimelech, who refuses to marry Ruth, serves as a foil for Boaz, but Boaz' supreme act of virtue is not his marriage to Ruth, but rather his willingness to inform the nearer kinsman of his rights. By this gesture Boaz was setting aside his personal desires for the requirements of the covenant law (Berlin 1983; 86). Boaz was a man advancing in years (3:10) who probably had no progeny (cf. the response of the nearer kinsman, 4:6); the story shows that he was rewarded with wife and son for his commitment.<sup>13</sup>

**H. He is reliable**, 3:13; 4:1-5. He can be counted on to keep his word and finish a task. He doesn't procrastinate. He gets things done in a timely manner. He does what he says he will do, as seen by his convening a "business court" as soon as possible after the business proposal was made. It didn't take months to move the deal through the system.

**I. He is shrewd**, 4:5. "Oh, by the way, if you buy the land, you have to take the Moabite gal as a wife". He knew how to "play his hand" just right to enhance his chance of winning.

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<sup>11</sup>Merriam-Webster, I. (2003). *Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary*. Includes index. (Eleventh ed.). Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster, Inc.

<sup>12</sup>*The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth*. 2004 (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.) (30). Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc. cf. *confer*, compare

<sup>13</sup>Freedman, David Noel: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York : Doubleday, 1996, c1992, S. 1:765

**J. He is used of the Lord.** Boaz is a man who knows and trusts the Lord and is available to be guided by Him. We have the privilege of “looking in” on history and seeing just how the Lord was guiding this situation to produce His desired ends.

## II. BOAZ, THE PILLAR OF DOMINANCE.

Boaz was a pillar in his community in his own day. But he was also a pillar of strength five generations later. When his great-great grandson, Solomon, need a name to signify strength he picked the name Boaz because he had heard so many stories about this man in his past. “Boaz” is the name of one of the two bronze pillars erected at the north side (or “left” facing E) of the entrance to Solomon’s temple (1 Kgs 7:21–22; 2 Chron 3:15–17).<sup>14</sup>

According to the Kings account, each pillar stood 18 cubits high (ca. 26.5 ft.) and was 12 cubits (ca. 17.5 ft.) in circumference. The pillars were made of cast bronze and were hollow, with the metal being four fingers (ca. 3 inches) thick. Each pillar was surmounted by a bowl-shaped capital (or double capital, so Yeivin 1959) five cubits (ca. 7.5 ft.) in height, giving the pillars a total height of 23 cubits (ca. 34 ft.).

The capitals were elaborately decorated, with “nets of checker work,” “wreaths of chain work,” and “two rows of pomegranates.” Jachin and Boaz were extraordinarily elaborate and large. With their ornate capitals, their shiny bronze surfaces, and their great height, they stood out against the rather flat and relatively unbroken exterior that the fortress-like temple would have presented to the viewer. Since the grandeur of the temple construction and decoration was largely contained inside the building itself, and since the interior was not public space (that is, it was off-limits to laity and to the general clergy), the imposing pillars at the entrance represented to the world at large that beauty, majesty, and dignity which existed unseen within the building.

Neither foreigners nor most Israelites had access to the temple, or to the holy ark that signified Yahweh’s unseen presence. Yet they all could see Jachin and Boaz, which communicated visually the entrance of God to this abode. This magnitude was appropriate to the religious and political role of Jerusalem and its state buildings as the seat of an empire.<sup>15</sup> These pillars were broken up and carried to Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar<sup>16</sup> in 587 B.C.

We have seen Boaz as the person of prominence in his community. We have seen Boaz as the pillar of dominance at the temple in Jerusalem. We now need to see Boaz as the picture of resemblance.

## III. BOAZ, THE PICTURE OF RESEMBLANCE TO JESUS.

I am using the word *picture* for the word *type*. A biblical *type* is a person or thing in the Old Testament believed to foreshadow or show characteristics of another in the New Testament. Herbert Lockyer says of Boaz, “As the Lord of the harvest, master of servants, redeemer, bridegroom and life-giver, he is a fitting type of Christ.”<sup>17</sup> Here are a six of the ways Boaz foreshadows or looks like Jesus:

**1. As the Man.** Boaz is introduced as “a mighty man”. There are five Hebrew words for *man*. This one is the word *ish*. This word is used when God is spoken of as a man and when

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E east(ern); or “Elohist” source

<sup>14</sup>Freedman, David Noel: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York : Doubleday, 1996, c1992, S. 1:765

ca. *circa* (about, approximately)

<sup>15</sup>Freedman, David Noel: *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*. New York : Doubleday, 1996, c1992, S. 3:597

<sup>16</sup>Easton, M.G.: *Easton's Bible Dictionary*. Oak Harbor, WA : Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1996, c1897

<sup>17</sup> Herbert Lockyer, *All The Men of the Bible*, p. 79.

someone is referred to as a man of God. When Eve said, "I have gotten a man from the LORD", she used the word *ish*. The promised man-child was not Cain. But Boaz was *the* Man of the moment that stood in the blood line to produce the Promised Man. As a man Boaz foreshadowed that Messiah would be a man.

**2. As a kinsman.** Boaz was the one in family who could and would fulfill the requirements of the law. Jesus was God in the flesh so that He could be the kinsman of humans who could and would fulfill the requirements of the law for us. Jesus is our near kinsman.

**3. As a king/priest.** The father of Boaz was Salmon. Salmon was a direct descendant of Judah and a nephew of Aaron. Boaz was a prince of the house of Judah and related to the priests of the house of Aaron. In Boaz the lines of king and priest converge by right of birth. This is in the like of Melchizedek and the Messiah. Jesus also filled both.

**4. With his words, The LORD be with you.** Boaz's first recorded words pointed directly to Jesus. His words indicated Immanuel (God with us), which is one of the names for Jesus. Boaz made it the first business of each day to remind his people that Immanuel was on the way.

**5. As the groom.** Boaz's relationship with Ruth shows the same love process that Jesus demonstrates for His church. Boaz finally marries Ruth. The Church is called the bride of Christ and we wait for the marriage supper with the Groom.

These are just a few ways Boaz shows the coming Christ. But there is one more, perhaps the major way, in which Boaz is a type of Jesus.

**6. As kinsman-redeemer.** The role of the kinsman-redeemer was not open to everyone. Only certain individuals could fulfill this role. To be the kinsman-redeemer three major things had to be in place:

**A. The K-R had to have the right to redeem.** He had to be a near kinsman, as has already been mentioned. Boaz had the right to redeem. He fit all the requirements. He was the near kin. In Jesus God is with us as our near kin.

**B. The K-R had to have the resolve to redeem.** It would have been bad news for Naomi and Ruth if Boaz had not desired to redeem her. That would have been a greater tragedy than having no eligible redeemer at all. In the story there was a nearer kinsman, but that one did not have the resolve to redeem. Apparently he did not want to mar his inheritance by marrying a Moabite or he didn't want to contaminate the purity of his bloodline. Boaz wasn't concerned about the purity of his pedigree. Salmon had married Rahab the harlot. That union produced Boaz. Boaz was not concerned about adding Moabite blood to his pedigree because he already had Canaanite blood in it. He pressed the issue until the nearer kinsman departed. Boaz not only had the right to redeem; he also had the resolve to redeem.

**C. The K-R had to have the resources to redeem.** Redemption is a costly business. One must have the resources to be able to make a purchase. We were introduced to Boaz as a man of wealth. He had the resources. If Boaz had been a beggar he could not have helped Ruth at all.

The same is true of Jesus. Fortunately for us Jesus was rich. Paul wrote, **"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you through His poverty might become rich."** (2 Corinthians 8:9, NASB95) We can't comprehend His riches. Listen to this summary of them: **In His country they pave the streets with gold, build the walls of jasper, and make their gates of pearl. And they build their palaces of ivory. Where he comes from, the streams are of molten crystal. The throne on which He sits is ablaze with the beauty of jasper and sardius stones, bathed in all the colors of the rainbow. The banks of the crystal stream are lined with the magnificent tree of life. His city is ablaze with uncreated light and its inhabitants have no need of the sun to shine by day or of the moon to**

shine by night. His ministers are a flame of fire. Ten thousand times ten thousand these sons of light hang on His words and rush to do His bidding---to the utmost bounds of the everlasting hills and the remotest edges of the vast empires of space (Rev. 5:21-22). Oh yes! He was rich.<sup>18</sup>

Another one of his riches is that He was sinless. He had all the riches of righteousness. He had no sin until He was on the cross when He became sin for us. If He would have had even one sin, He would not have had the resource need to redeem us. But, He had the resources.

Boaz had the resources to purchase the person and property of Ruth. Boaz purchased Ruth (4:9-10). He began by meeting all the demands of the law. The Law of God raised a barrier between Ruth and God. There was no way that she, as a Moabite, could fulfill even the least of its demands. But Boaz could and did. He methodically and meticulously met every demand of the law concerning the kinsman-redeemer. The law of the K-R was a higher law than the law against the Moabites. Boaz paid the price of Ruth's redemption and bought her at great cost to himself and made her his own. Jesus did the same for us.

The redemption included the property of Ruth. Boaz paid the price of the land and it became his. Likewise, Jesus paid the price for this earth. Paul wrote in Romans "that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God." (Romans 8:21, NASB95) This is a reason there has to be a millennial reign of Jesus upon this earth. The Lord bought this world at infinite cost, His blood, and He will return to take possession of His purchase and rule over it like it was intended, full of beauty and bliss far beyond our comprehension.

Take one more look at Boaz. After the purchases, He took Ruth as his wife. He had so satisfied the demands of the law that there were no more barriers between her soul and her savior. Now Jesus could be born through one of her descendents, and He was.

**CONCLUSION:** Once the redeemer is introduced into our life's story, He must become the center of everything just like Boaz. Once Boaz was introduced into the story of Ruth, he dominates it. He is the royal kinsman. He is the mighty man of wealth. He is able and willing to redeem. He takes poor, alien Ruth to himself and puts her in the family of God.<sup>19</sup> So our heavenly Boaz has done the same for us.

Is He your kinsman-redeemer? If not, why not let Him redeem you today? Come to Him.

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<sup>18</sup> Phillips, p. 84.

<sup>19</sup> John Phillips, *Exploring People of the Old Testament*, Vol. 2; Grand Rapids, MI. Kregel Publications, 2006, pp. 79-80.