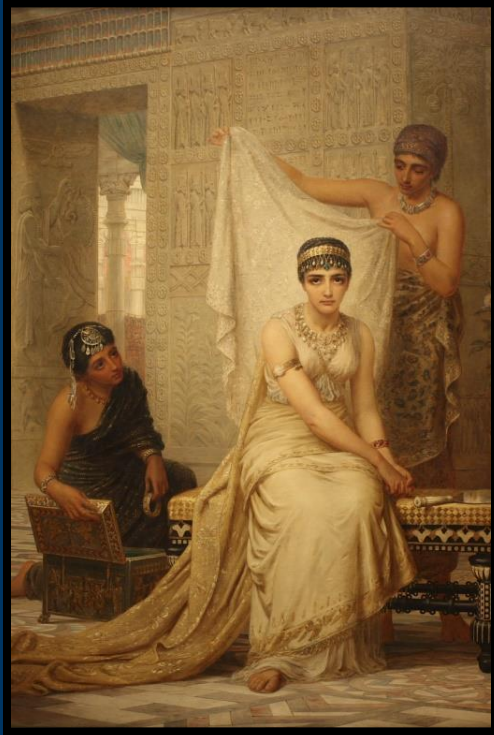




The Book of Ruth

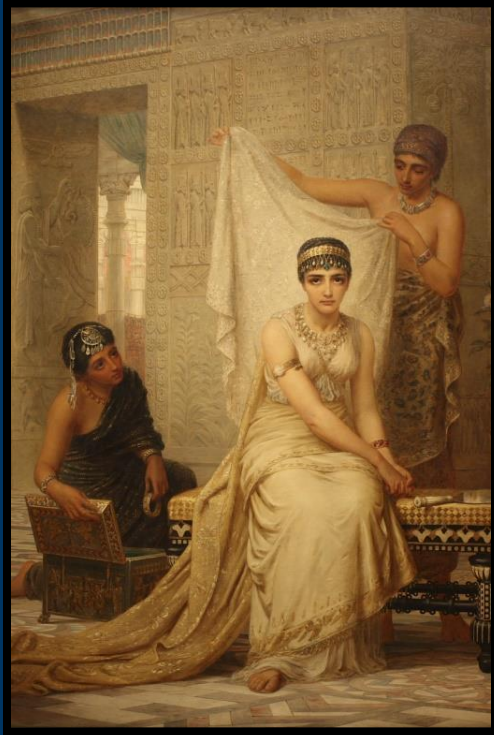
A story presented in three acts.

Two books in the Bible are named
for women: Esther and Ruth



Two books in the Bible are named
for women: Esther and Ruth

Esther, a Jew, married a Gentile.



Two books in the Bible are named
for women: Esther and Ruth

Esther, a Jew, married a Gentile.

Ruth, a Gentile, married a Jew.





Two books in the Bible are named
for women: Esther and Ruth

Traditionally, the book of Esther
is read on the Feast of Purim.

Ruth is read on Pentecost.



To understand the story of Ruth, one must understand the law of Moses concerning inheritance:

Numbers 27:8b-11

- ⁸ ... **If a man die, and have no son,**
then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.
- ⁹ **And if he have no daughter,**
then ye shall give his inheritance unto his brethren.
- ¹⁰ **And if he have no brethren,**
then ye shall give his inheritance unto his father's brethren.
- ¹¹ **And if his father have no brethren,**
then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it:
and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

Line of Hereditary Succession:

1. The dead man's son, beginning with the eldest
2. His daughter, beginning with the eldest
3. His brother
4. His uncle
5. His nearest relative

Numbers 27:8b-11

- ⁸ ... **If a man die, and have no son,**
then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his daughter.
- ⁹ **And if he have no daughter,**
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- ¹¹ **And if his father have no brethren,**
then ye shall give his inheritance unto his kinsman that is next to him of his family, and he shall possess it:
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As we shall see, the rights of the *kinsman that is next to him of his family* is very important to the story of Ruth.

Numbers 27:8b-11

- ⁸ ... If a man die, and have no son,
then ye shall cause his inheritance to pass unto his
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- ⁹ And if he have no daughter,
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- ¹¹ And if his father have no brethren,
then ye shall give his inheritance unto **his kinsman
that is next to him of his family**, and he shall
possess it:
and it shall be unto the children of Israel a statute
of judgment, as the LORD commanded Moses.

The Rights of the Kinsman

In Old Testament Israel, great importance was placed on preserving the land rights that were assigned to each tribe when Joshua divided up the Promised Land. If ever a man was forced to sell his land in order to escape poverty, a relative or *kinsman* had the right to pay that debt and claim the land for himself, thus keeping the land within the tribe.

Leviticus 25:25

²⁵ If thy brother be waxen poor, and hath sold away some of his possession, and if any of his kin come to redeem it, then shall he redeem that which his brother sold.



The Rights of the Kinsman

If ever a man was forced into indentured servitude, a *kinsman* had the right to buy his freedom back again.

Leviticus 25:47-49

- ⁴⁷ And if a sojourner or stranger wax rich by thee, and thy brother *that dwelleth* by him wax poor, and sell himself unto the stranger or sojourner by thee, or to the stock of the stranger's family:
- ⁴⁸ After that he is sold he may be redeemed again; one of his brethren may redeem him:
- ⁴⁹ Either his uncle, or his uncle's son, may redeem him, **or any that is nigh of kin unto him of his family may redeem him**; or if he be able, he may redeem himself.

The Rights of the Kinsman

If a man were to die without an heir, his brother was expected to marry his widow and sire a child in his name. This provision of the *Levirate* marriage (from the Latin word *levir* meaning *husband's brother*) assured that the dead man's name be not "put out of Israel."

Deuteronomy 25:5-6

- 5 If brethren dwell together, and one of them die, and have no child, the wife of the dead shall not marry without unto a stranger: her husband's brother shall go in unto her, and take her to him to wife, and perform the duty of an husband's brother unto her.
- 6 And it shall be, *that* the firstborn which she beareth shall succeed in the name of his brother *which is* dead, that his name be not put out of Israel.

The Rights of the Kinsman

If a man were to die without an heir, his brother was expected to marry his widow and sire a child in his name. This provision of the *Levirate* marriage (from the Latin word *levir* meaning *husband's brother*) assured that the dead man's name be not "put out of Israel."

Luke 20:27-28

- ²⁷ Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,
- ²⁸ Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, **If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.**

This was the premise upon which the Sadducees tried to trick Jesus:



The Rights of the Kinsman

If a brother could not or would not perform this duty, the responsibility fell upon the closest willing relative.

Luke 20:27-28

²⁷ Then came to *him* certain of the Sadducees, which deny that there is any resurrection; and they asked him,

²⁸ Saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, **If any man's brother die, having a wife, and he die without children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.**



Any brother who refused to perform this duty brought disgrace to his name.

Deuteronomy 25:7-10

- 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say,
My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name 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 unto him: and *if* he stand to it, and say, I like not to take her;
- 9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.
- 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

Any brother who refused to perform this duty brought disgrace to his name.

In this highly patriarchal society, it was exceedingly grievous for a woman to spit in a man's face for any other reason.

Deuteronomy 25:7-10

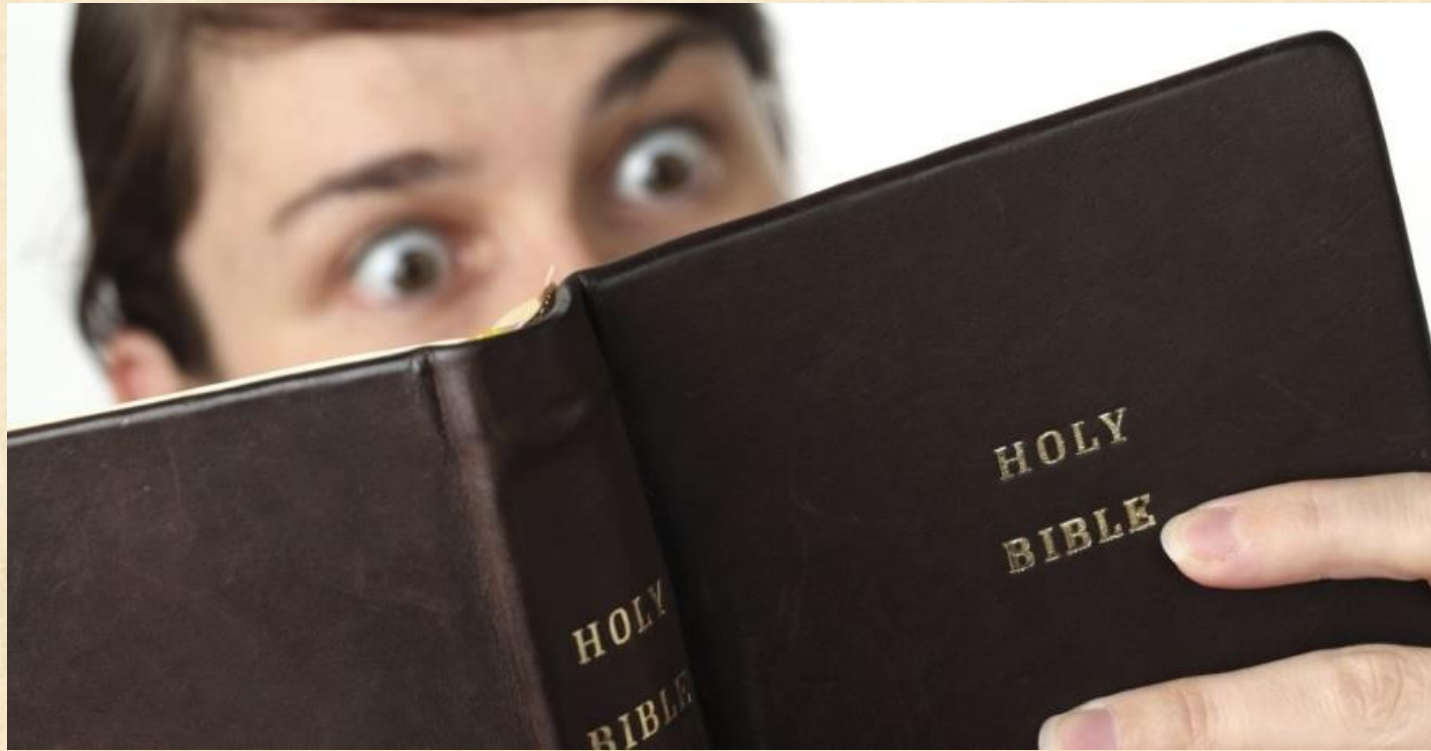
- 7 And if the man like not to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate unto the elders, and say,
My husband's brother refuseth to raise up unto his brother a name in Israel, he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.
- 8 Then the elders of his city shall call him, and speak unto him: and *if he stand to it*, and say, I like not to take her;
- 9 Then shall his brother's wife come unto him in the presence of the elders, and loose his shoe from off his foot, and spit in his face, and shall answer and say, So shall it be done unto that man that will not build up his brother's house.
- 10 And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.

Judah's son Onan scorned his brotherly duty and was severely punished:

Genesis 38:6-10

- 6 And Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, whose name *was* Tamar.
- 7 And Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD; and the LORD slew him.
- 8 And Judah said unto Onan, Go in unto thy brother's wife, and marry her, and raise up seed to thy brother.
- 9 And Onan knew that the seed should not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in unto his brother's wife, that he spilled *it* on the ground, lest that he should give seed to his brother.
- 10 And the thing which he did displeased the LORD: wherefore he slew him also.

The things we discover in the Bible can be quite surprising.





We are now ready to begin our examination of the book.



The story of Ruth is like a play presented in three acts:

Prologue

Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

Act 2: The Kinsman

Act 3: Naomi's Joy

Epilogue



The Prologue: An Israelite family in Moab

The Prologue

The prologue tells the background of the story, and how Naomi's family came to live in Moab.

Ruth 1:1-2

- ¹ Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.
- ² And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

The Prologue

Ephrath was the ancient name of Bethlehem.

Genesis 35:19

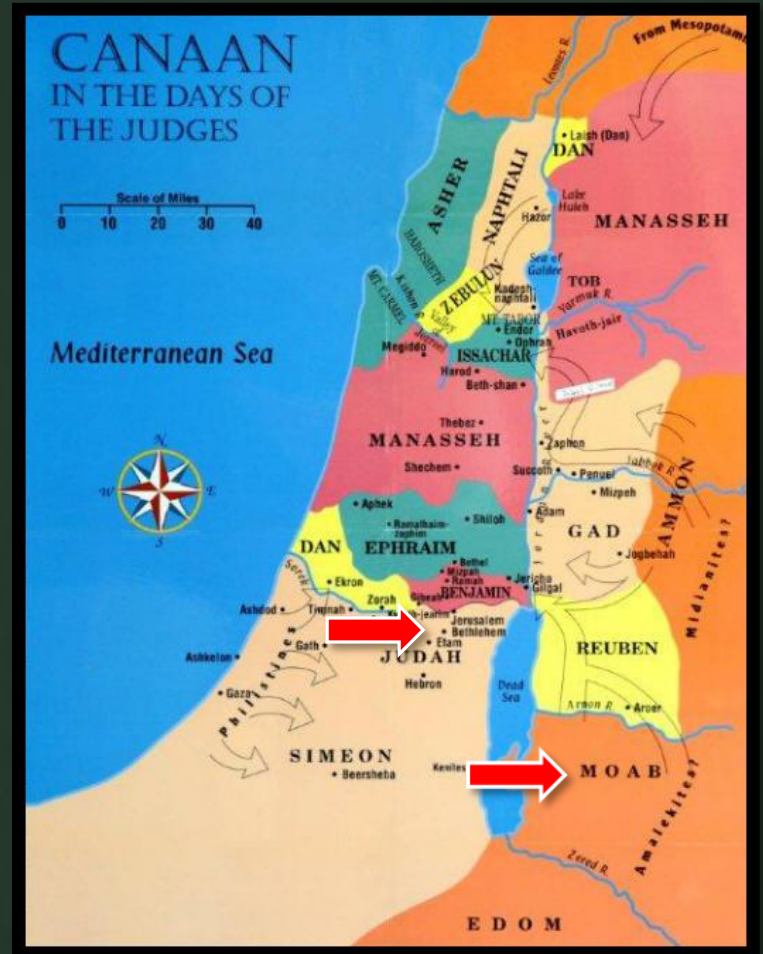
¹⁹ And Rachel died,
and was buried in the way to Ephrath, which *is* Bethlehem.

Ruth 1:1-2

- ¹ Now it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehemjudah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.
- ² And the name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife Naomi, and the name of his two sons Mahlon and Chilion, **Ephrathites of Bethlehemjudah.** And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

Bethlehem is situated in the Judean Hills, about five miles south of Jerusalem.

Moab was in a region that is now the nation of Jordan.



The Moabites were the descendants of Abraham's nephew, Lot. Theirs was a very dark beginning. This event occurred soon after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Genesis 19:30-32; 36-38

- ³⁰ And Lot went up out of Zoar, and dwelt in the mountain, and his two daughters with him; for he feared to dwell in Zoar: and he dwelt in a cave, he and his two daughters.
- ³¹ And the firstborn said unto the younger, Our father *is* old, and *there is* not a man in the earth to come in unto us after the manner of all the earth:
- ³² Come, let us make our father drink wine, and we will lie with him, that we may preserve seed of our father.
- ³⁶ Thus were both the daughters of Lot with child by their father.
- ³⁷ And the firstborn bare a son, and called his name Moab: the same *is* the father of the Moabites unto this day.
- ³⁸ And the younger, she also bare a son, and called his name Benammi: the same *is* the father of the children of Ammon unto this day.

The Prologue

After Naomi's husband died, her sons each married a woman of Moab.

Ruth 1:3-4

- ³ And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.
- ⁴ And they took them wives of the women of Moab; the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth: and they dwelled there about ten years.



These marriages might not have happened if the father had lived. The law of Moses forbid the people of Moab and Ammon from joining themselves to Israel.

Deuteronomy 23:3-4, 6

- 3 An Ammonite or Moabite shall not enter into the congregation of the LORD; even to their tenth generation shall they not enter into the congregation of the LORD for ever:
- 4 Because they met you not with bread and with water in the way, when ye came forth out of Egypt; and because they hired against thee Balaam the son of Beor of Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse thee.
- 6 Thou shalt not seek their peace nor their prosperity all thy days for ever.

The Prologue

Naomi's troubles increased even more when her two sons *also* died, both of them apparently childless as well.

Ruth 1:5

⁵ And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.



The Prologue

With their husbands dead, neither Orpah and Ruth had any obligation to care or provide for Naomi.

Romans 7:2

² For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to *her* husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of *her* husband.

Ruth 1:5

⁵ And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.



The Prologue

Naomi's future seemed utterly bleak.

Ruth 1:5

⁵ And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.



A stage with red curtains and a wooden floor. The curtains are a deep red color with gold tassels on the sides. The floor is made of light-colored wood planks. A white banner is positioned in the center of the stage.

Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

A scenic view of a dirt road winding through green hills, framed by red curtains, with a wooden floor in the foreground. The scene is presented as if through a stage window. The foreground shows a dark wooden plank floor. The middle ground is a dirt road that curves through lush green fields and rolling hills under a clear blue sky with light clouds. The background features more distant hills and a clear horizon. The red curtains are pulled back on both sides, framing the landscape.

Act 1, Scene 1: On the road leaving Moab

Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

Having heard the famine in Israel had ended, Naomi decided to return to her homeland.

Ruth 1:6-7

- ⁶ Then she arose with her daughters in law, that she might return from the country of Moab: for she had heard in the country of Moab how that the LORD had visited his people in giving them bread.
- ⁷ Wherefore she went forth out of the place where she was, and her two daughters in law with her; and they went on the way to return unto the land of Judah.



Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

But Naomi told Orpah and Ruth to remain among their own people and find a new husband.

Ruth 1:8-9

- ⁸ And Naomi said unto her two daughters in law,
Go, return each to her mother's house:
the LORD deal kindly with you,
as ye have dealt with the dead,
and with me.
- ⁹ The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband.





Ruth 1:9b-10

- ⁹ ... Then she kissed them;
and they lifted up their voice,
and wept.
- ¹⁰ And they said unto her,
Surely we will return with thee
unto thy people.



But Naomi proved the logic of her decision.

Ruth 1:11-13

- ¹¹ And Naomi said,
Turn again, my daughters:
why will ye go with me?
are there yet any more sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?
- ¹² Turn again, my daughters, go *your way*;
for I am too old to have an husband.

If I should say, I have hope, *if I should have an husband also to night, and should also bear sons;*
- ¹³ Would ye tarry for them till they were grown?
would ye stay for them from having husbands?
nay, my daughters;
for it grieveth me much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD is gone out against me.



Ruth refused to leave her side.

Ruth 1:14

¹⁴ And they lifted up their voice,
and wept again:
and Orpah kissed her mother in law;
but Ruth clave unto her.





Ruth 1:15-17

- ¹⁵ And she [Naomi] said,
Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people,
and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.
- ¹⁶ And Ruth said,
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.

Ruth's pledge to her mother-in-law has been incorporated into traditional wedding VOWS.

Ruth 1:15-17

- ¹⁵ And she [Naomi] said,
Behold, thy sister in law is gone back unto her people,
and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister in law.
- ¹⁶ And Ruth said,
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.



Naomi let her silence speak for itself.

Ruth 1:18-19a

- ¹⁸ When she saw that she was steadfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.
- ¹⁹ So they two went until they came to Bethlehem...



The image shows a stage set for a play. In the foreground, there is a dark wooden floor. On either side, there are heavy, draped red curtains. The background is a large, painted backdrop depicting a town built on a hillside. The town has yellowish-tan walls and a prominent red-roofed building. The landscape is hilly and green, with a small stream or path visible. The sky is a pale, hazy blue. A white rectangular box with red text is overlaid on the center of the backdrop.

Act 1, Scene 2: Back in Bethlehem

Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

When Naomi arrived in her homeland, she made it clear that there was no cause for celebration.

Ruth 1:19b

¹⁹ ...And it came to pass, when they were come to Bethlehem, that all the city was moved about them, and they said, *Is this Naomi?*





Ruth 1:20-21

- ²⁰ And she said unto them,
Call me not Naomi, call me Mara:
for the Almighty hath dealt very
bitterly with me.
- ²¹ I went out full, and the LORD hath
brought me home again empty:
why *then* call ye me Naomi,
seeing the LORD hath testified
against me, and the Almighty hath
afflicted me?



Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

Naomi means *Pleasant*.
Mara means *Bitter*.

Ruth 1:20-21

- ²⁰ And she said unto them,
Call me not Naomi, call me Mara:
for the Almighty hath dealt very
bitterly with me.
- ²¹ I went out full, and the LORD hath
brought me home again empty:
why *then* call ye me Naomi,
seeing the LORD hath testified
against me, and the Almighty hath
afflicted me?





Ruth 1:22

²² So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter in law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.





The barley harvest began at Pentecost.

Ruth 1:22

²² So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite, her daughter-in-law, with her, which returned out of the country of Moab: and they came to Bethlehem in the beginning of barley harvest.



A stage with red curtains and a wooden floor. The curtains are pulled back, revealing a wooden stage floor. The text "Act 2: The Kinsman" is displayed in a white box in the center of the image.

Act 2: The Kinsman

A stage set for Act 2, Scene 1 of a play, depicting a rustic interior. The scene is framed by heavy red curtains on both sides. The floor is made of dark wooden planks. In the center, there is a stone fireplace with a small arched opening. To the left of the fireplace, there are several large, round, earthenware pots and a wooden bowl. The walls are made of rough, textured stone. In the background, a doorway leads to another room, where a bright light is visible. The overall atmosphere is warm and rustic.

Act 2, Scene 1: At Naomi's home in Bethlehem

Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

Naomi's husband and sons had died leaving no heir, but her problem could be resolved by a near kinsman. This is what makes Boaz so important to this story.

Ruth 2:1

- 1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was **Boaz**.



Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

But Naomi's situation was more complicated. She herself was too old to be eligible for a levirate marriage, and her son's widow was a *Moabite* and not a Jew – a fact that is echoed throughout this story.

Ruth 2:2

- ² And **Ruth the Moabite** said unto Naomi,
Let me now go to the field,
and glean ears of corn after *him* in
whose sight I shall find grace.
And she said unto her,
Go, my daughter.



Act 1: Naomi's Sorrow

Ruth was not referring to Boaz. She still knew nothing about him. She set out to find *anyone* who would grant her the grace to glean in their fields.

Ruth 2:2

- ² And Ruth the Moabitess said unto Naomi,
Let me now go to the field,
and glean ears of corn after *him* in
whose sight I shall find grace.
And she said unto her,
Go, my daughter.





Ruth 2:2

² And Ruth the Moabitess
said unto Naomi,
Let me now go to the field,
and glean ears of corn after *him* in
whose sight I shall find grace.
And she said unto her,
Go, my daughter.

To *glean* is to gather what is left by the reapers.



This is how God provided for the stranger, the fatherless, and the widow.

Deuteronomy 24:19-22

¹⁹ When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it:
it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow:
that the LORD thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands.

²⁰ When thou beatest thine olive tree, thou shalt not go over the boughs again:

it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

²¹ When thou gatherest the grapes of thy vineyard, thou shalt not glean it afterward:

it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow.

²² And thou shalt remember that thou wast a bondman in the land of Egypt: therefore I command thee to do this thing.

The image depicts a stage set for a theatrical production. In the foreground, a dark, weathered wooden plank floor extends across the bottom. On either side, heavy, deep red curtains are drawn back, framing the view. Beyond the curtains, a vast field of golden wheat stretches to the horizon. The sky above is filled with dramatic, grey, and white clouds, with a bright light source, likely the sun, breaking through near the horizon, creating a hazy, atmospheric glow over the entire scene.

Act 2, Scene 2: In the fields of Boaz



Ruth 2:3

³ And she went, and came,
and gleaned in the field after the
reapers:
and her hap was to light on a part
of the field *belonging* unto Boaz,
who *was* of the kindred of
Elimelech.



Act 2: The Kinsman

Things that seem to occur entirely by happenstance are often guided by the Father's hand.

Ruth 2:3

- ³ And she went, and came, and gleaned in the field after the reapers:
and **her hap** was to light on a part of the field *belonging* unto Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech.



Act 2: The Kinsman

And on this day, Boaz decided to check up on his workers in the fields.

Ruth 2:4

⁴ And, behold,
Boaz came from Bethlehem,
and said unto the reapers,
The LORD *be with you.*
And they answered him,
The LORD *bless thee.*





Ruth 2:5-7

- ⁵ Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, *Whose damsel is this?*
- ⁶ And the servant that was set over the reapers answered and said,
It is the Moabitish damsel that came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab:
- ⁷ And she said, I pray you, let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves:
so she came, and hath continued even from the morning until now, that she tarried a little in the house.



Boaz made sure that Ruth felt welcome *and safe*.

Ruth 2:8-9

- ⁸ Then said Boaz unto Ruth,
Hearest thou not, my daughter?
Go not to glean in another field, neither go from
hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:
⁹ Let thine eyes *be* on the field that they do reap,
and go thou after them:
have I not charged the young men that they shall
not touch thee?
and when thou art athirst, go unto the vessels, and
drink of *that* which the young men have drawn.

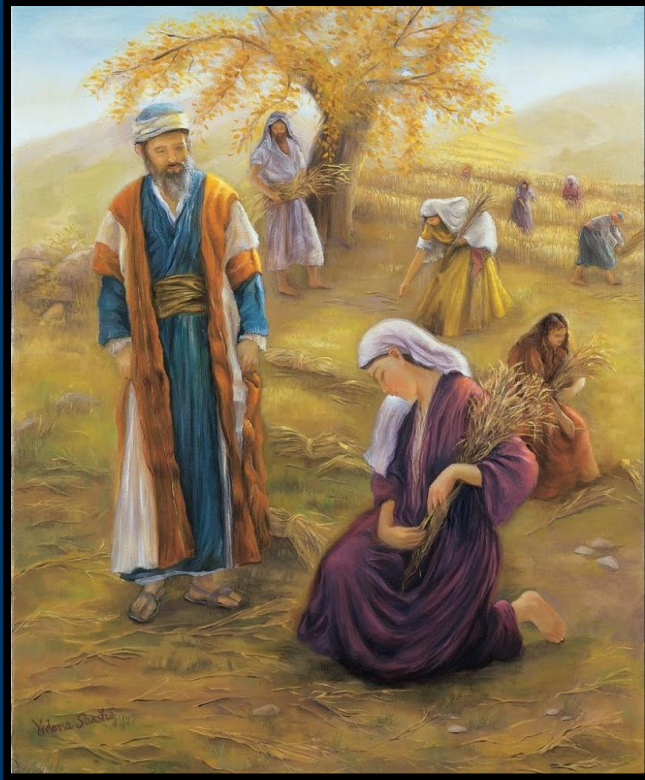


Ruth was puzzled by the kindness he showed her.

Ruth 2:10

¹⁰ Then she fell on her face, and bowed herself to the ground, and said unto him, Why have I found grace in thine eyes, that thou shouldest take knowledge of me, seeing I *am* a stranger?





But Boaz had heard about the young widow caring for Naomi.

Ruth 2:11-12

- ¹¹ And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shewed me, all that thou hast done unto thy mother in law since the death of thine husband: and how thou hast left thy father and thy mother, and the land of thy nativity, and art come unto a people which thou knewest not heretofore.
- ¹² The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.



Ruth was well aware that most Israelites did not treat her people with kindness.

Ruth 2:13

¹³ Then she said,
Let me find favour in thy sight,
my lord;
for that thou hast comforted me,
and for that thou hast spoken
friendly unto thine handmaid,
though I be not like unto one of
thine handmaidens.





Boaz further defied the norm when he invited her to join the others for a meal.

Ruth 2:14

¹⁴ And Boaz said unto her,
At mealtime come thou hither,
and eat of the bread,
and dip thy morsel in the vinegar.
And she sat beside the reapers:
and he reached her parched corn,
and she did eat, and was sufficed,
and left.



Act 2: The Kinsman

When Ruth returned to the fields, Boaz instructed his workers to “pull out some from the bundles for her, and leave it for her to glean” (RSV).

Ruth 2:15-16

- ¹⁵ And when she was risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying,
Let her glean even among the sheaves, and reproach her not:
- ¹⁶ And let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her, and leave *them*, that she may glean *them*, and rebuke her not.





Ruth 2:17

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until even,
and beat out that she had gleaned:
and it was about an ephah of barley.





Ruth 2:17

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about **an ephah of barley**.

An ephah is about a bushel, weighing almost 48 pounds.





Act 2, Scene 3: In Naomi's home

Ruth brought her bounty –
and the food she had saved
for her – home to Naomi.

Ruth 2:18-19

- ¹⁸ And she took *it* up, and went into the city:
and her mother in law saw what she had gleaned:
and she brought forth, and gave to her that she
had reserved after she was sufficed.
- ¹⁹ And her mother in law said unto her,
Where hast thou gleaned to day?
and where wroughtest thou [where did you work]?
blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee.

When Ruth told Naomi the name of her benefactor, she was thankful and amazed.

Ruth 2:19b-20a

- ¹⁹ ... And she shewed her mother in law with whom she had wrought, and said,
The man's name with whom I wrought to day
is Boaz.
- ²⁰ And Naomi said unto her daughter in law,
Blessed *be* he of the LORD,
who hath not left off his kindness to the living
and to the dead.

Act 2: The Kinsman

The name of Boaz was well-known to Naomi.

Ruth 2:20b

²⁰ ...And Naomi said unto her,
The man is near of kin unto us,
one of our next kinsmen.





Naomi counseled her to
work no where else.

Ruth 2:21-22

- ²¹ And Ruth the Moabite said,
He said unto me also,
Thou shalt keep fast by my young men,
until they have ended all my harvest.
- ²² And Naomi said unto Ruth her daughter in law,
It is good, my daughter,
that thou go out with his maidens,
that they meet thee not in any other field.

Act 2: The Kinsman

The barley fields were eventually picked clean, so Ruth gleaned the wheat fields after that, all the while providing for Naomi.

Ruth 2:23

²³ So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest;
and dwelt with her mother in law.



Act 2: The Kinsman

“The barley-harvest precedes the wheat-harvest by a week or fortnight. On the 4th and 5th of June the people of Hebron were just beginning to gather their wheat; on the 11th and 12th the threshing-floors on the Mount of Olives were in full operation.”

PULPIT COMMENTARY

Ruth 2:23

²³ So she kept fast by the maidens of Boaz to glean unto the end of barley harvest and of wheat harvest;
and dwelt with her mother in law.



Act 2: The Kinsman

Naomi recognized that an opportunity had come for her to try to improve Ruth's situation.

Ruth 3:1-2

- ¹ Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her,
My daughter,
shall I not seek rest for thee,
that it may be well with thee?
- ² And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast?
Behold, he winnoweth barley to night in the threshingfloor.





To winnow is to blow a current of air through grain to remove the chaff.

Ruth 3:1-2

- ¹ Then Naomi her mother in law said unto her,
My daughter,
shall I not seek rest for thee,
that it may be well with thee?
- ² And now is not Boaz of our
kindred, with whose maidens
thou wast?

Behold, he winnoweth barley
to night in the threshingfloor.





Naomi instructed Ruth how to present herself to Boaz

Ruth 3:3-5

- 3 Wash thyself therefore, and anoint thee, and put thy raiment upon thee, and get thee down to the floor: *but make not thyself known unto the man, until he shall have done eating and drinking.*
- 4 And it shall be, when he lieth down, that thou shalt mark the place where he shall lie, and thou shalt go in, and uncover his feet, and lay thee down; and he will tell thee what thou shalt do.
- 5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.



Act 2, Scene 4: In the Threshing Room



Ruth 3:6-7

- ⁶ And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother in law bade her.
- ⁷ And when Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was merry, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of corn: and she came softly, and uncovered his feet, and laid her down.





Ruth 3:8-9

- 8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.
- 9 And he said, *Who art thou?* And she answered, *I am Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou art a near kinsman.*



Act 2: The Kinsman

Boaz understood that Ruth was asking to be his wife and the mother of his child. “Take me to be thy wife, and perform the duty of an husband to me.”

Ruth 3:8-9

- ⁸ And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.
- ⁹ And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: **spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid;** for thou *art* a near kinsman.



Act 2: The Kinsman

This same expression is used in God's covenant of marriage with Israel:

Ezekiel 16:8

⁸ Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swear unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

Ruth 3:8-9

⁸ And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.
⁹ And he said, Who *art* thou? And she answered, I *am* Ruth thine handmaid: spread therefore thy skirt over thine handmaid; for thou *art* a near kinsman.





Ruth 3:10-11

- ¹⁰ And he said,
Blessed be thou of the LORD,
my daughter:
for thou hast shewed more
kindness in the latter end than at
the beginning,
inasmuch as thou followedst not
young men, whether poor or rich.
- ¹¹ And now, my daughter, fear not;
I will do to thee all that thou
requirest:
for all the city of my people doth
know that thou *art* a virtuous
woman.

But there was a further complication – a man more closely related to Elimelech than Boaz had the right of first refusal.

Ruth 3:12-13

- ¹² And now it is true that I *am thy* near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.
- ¹³ Tarry this night, and it shall be in the morning, *that* if he will perform unto thee the part of a kinsman, well; let him do the kinsman's part: but if he will not do the part of a kinsman to thee, then will I do the part of a kinsman to thee, *as the LORD liveth*:
lie down until the morning.





Ruth 3:14-15

- ¹⁴ And she lay at his feet until the morning:
and she rose up before one could know another.
And he said,
Let it not be known that a woman came into the floor.
- ¹⁵ Also he said,
Bring the vail that *thou hast* upon thee, and hold it.
And when she held it,
he measured six *measures* of barley, and laid *it* on her:
and she went into the city.

A stage set for Act 2, Scene 5 of a play. The scene is set in a rustic, stone-walled interior, likely a kitchen or a hearth. The walls are made of rough-hewn stone and mud. In the center, there is a built-in stone fireplace with a small arched opening. To the left of the fireplace, there are several large, round, earthenware pots and bowls, some resting on a wooden stand. The floor is made of dark, weathered wooden planks. On the right side, there is a doorway or a narrow passage leading to another room, where a bright light is visible. The entire scene is framed by heavy, dark red curtains on both sides, which are pulled back to reveal the set. The lighting is warm and focused on the central area, creating a sense of intimacy and atmosphere.

Act 2, Scene 5: Back at Naomi's house



Naomi was anxious to know if her plan had been fruitful.

Ruth 3:16-18

- ¹⁶ And when she came to her mother in law, she said,
Who art thou, my daughter?
And she told her all that the man had done to her.
- ¹⁷ And she said,
These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me,
Go not empty unto thy mother in law.
- ¹⁸ Then said she,
Sit still, my daughter,
until thou know how the matter will fall:
for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.



Naomi was anxious to know if her plan had been fruitful.

Ruth 3:16-18

¹⁶ And when she came to her mother in law, she said,

Who art thou, my daughter?

And she said, “How did you fare, my daughter?” (RSV) to her.

¹⁷ And she said,

These six *measures* of barley gave he me; for he said to me,

Go not empty unto thy mother in law.

¹⁸ Then said she,

Sit still, my daughter,

until thou know how the matter will fall:

for the man will not be in rest, until he have finished the thing this day.

A stage with red curtains and a wooden floor. The curtains are a deep red color and are drawn back on both sides, revealing a wooden floor. The lighting is warm, highlighting the texture of the curtains and the grain of the wood. A white banner is positioned across the middle of the stage.

Act 3: Naomi's Joy



Act 3, Scene 1: At the city gates

Act 3: Naomi's Joy

Just as Naomi predicted, Boaz wasted no time in arranging a meeting with the nearer kinsman and the elders to settle the issue.

Ruth 4:1-2

- 1 Then went Boaz up to the gate, and sat him down there: and, behold, the kinsman of whom Boaz spake came by; unto whom he said, **Ho, such a one!** **turn aside, sit down here.** And he turned aside, and sat down.
- 2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, **Sit ye down here.** And they sat down.





Ruth 4:3-4

- 3 And he said unto the kinsman,
Naomi, that is come again out of the
country of Moab, selleth a parcel of land,
which was our brother Elimelech's:
- 4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying,
Buy *it* before the inhabitants,
and before the elders of my people.
If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*:
but if thou wilt not redeem *it*,
then tell me, that I may know:
for *there is* none to redeem *it* beside thee;
and I *am* after thee.
- And he said, I will redeem *it*.

Boaz started off with the most attractive part of the deal – the acquisition of land. To this, the nearer kinsman readily agreed. But there was *more* to be discussed:

Ruth 4:3-4

- 3 And he said unto the kinsman,
Naomi, that is come again out of the
country of Moab, selleth **a parcel of land,
which was our brother Elimelech's:**
- 4 And I thought to advertise thee, saying,
Buy *it* before the inhabitants,
and before the elders of my people.
If thou wilt redeem *it*, redeem *it*:
but if thou wilt not redeem *it*,
then tell me, that I may know:
for *there is* none to redeem *it* beside thee;
and I *am* after thee.
- And he said, I will redeem *it*.



Ruth 4:5-6

- ⁵ Then said Boaz,
What day thou buyest the field of the hand
of Naomi, thou must buy *it* also of Ruth the
Moabite, the wife of the dead, to raise up
the name of the dead upon his inheritance.
- ⁶ And the kinsman said,
I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I mar mine
own inheritance:
redeem thou my right to thyself;
for I cannot redeem *it*.



Ruth 4:7-8

- 7 Now this was the manner in former time in Israel concerning redeeming and concerning changing, for to confirm all things; a man plucked off his shoe, and gave it to his neighbour: and this was a testimony in Israel.
- 8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee.
So he drew off his shoe.



Ruth 4:9-10

- ⁹ And Boaz said unto the elders,
and unto all the people,
Ye *are* witnesses this day, that I have bought
all that *was* Elimelech's, and all that *was*
Chilion's and Mahlon's, of the hand of Naomi.
- ¹⁰ Moreover Ruth the Moabitess,
the wife of Mahlon,
have I purchased to be my wife,
to raise up the name of the dead upon his
inheritance, that the name of the dead be not
cut off from among his brethren, and from
the gate of his place:
ye *are* witnesses this day.



Ruth 4:11-12

¹¹ And all the people that were in the gate, and the elders, said, *We are witnesses.*

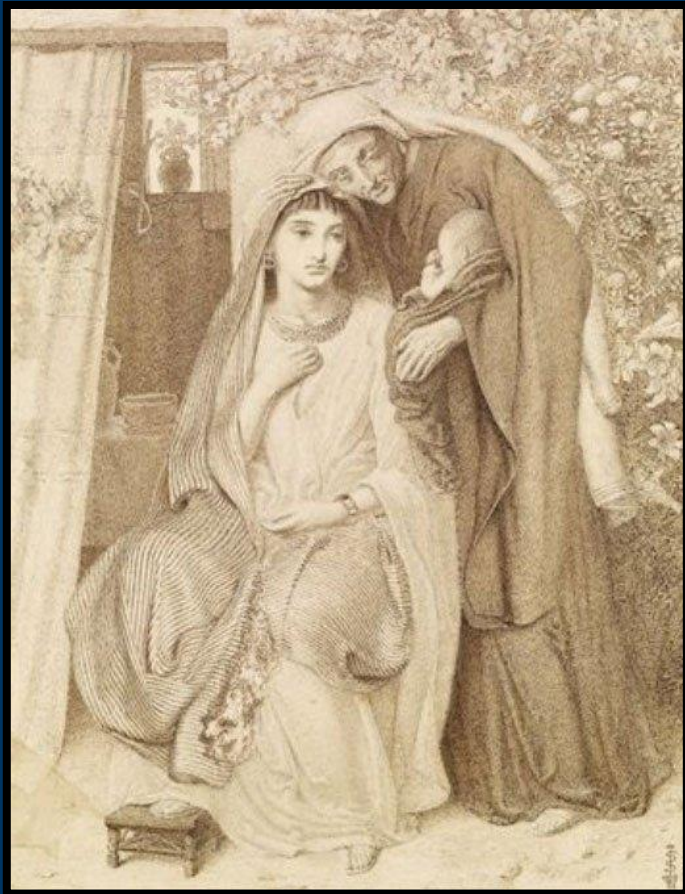
The LORD make the woman that is come into thine house like Rachel and like Leah, which two did build the house of Israel:

and do thou worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem:

¹² And let thy house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bare unto Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give thee of this young woman.



Act 3, Scene 2: At the home of Boaz



Ruth 4:13-15


- ¹³ So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife:
and when he went in unto her,
the LORD gave her conception,
and she bare a son.
- ¹⁴ And the women said unto Naomi,
Blessed *be* the LORD, which hath not left
thee this day without a kinsman,
that his name may be famous in Israel.
- ¹⁵ And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy
life, and a nourisher of thine old age:
for thy daughter in law, which loveth thee,
which is better to thee than seven sons,
hath born him.



Ruth 4:16-17

- ¹⁶ And Naomi took the child,
and laid it in her bosom,
and became nurse unto it.
- ¹⁷ And the women her neighbours
gave it a name, saying,
There is a son born to Naomi;
and they called his name Obed:
he is the father of Jesse,
the father of David.



The image features a composition of natural and historical elements. On the left side, there is a cluster of golden wheat stalks with long, thin awns, set against a plain white background. To the right of the wheat is a large, blank scroll of aged, yellowish-brown parchment. The scroll is partially unrolled, with its left edge showing the rolled-up portion. The entire scene is framed by a thin black border.

The Epilogue: God's Plan Revealed



Ruth 4:18-22

¹⁸ Now these *are* the generations of Pharez:

Pharez begat Hezron,

¹⁹ And Hezron begat Ram,
and Ram begat Amminadab,

²⁰ And Amminadab begat Nahshon,
and Nahshon begat Salmon,

²¹ And Salmon begat **Boaz**,
and Boaz begat Obed,

²² And Obed begat Jesse,
and Jesse begat **David**.



The Epilogue

Ruth the Moabitess, the one the nearer kinsman would not redeem “lest I mar mine own inheritance,” was ordained of God’s to be the grandmother of King David, and an ancestor of the Savior – and our kinsman redeemer – Jesus Christ.

Ruth 4:18-22

- ¹⁸ Now these *are* the generations of Pharez:
- Pharez begat Hezron,
- ¹⁹ And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,
- ²⁰ And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,
- ²¹ And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,
- ²² And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat **David**.





The Allegory of Ruth:

The “nearer kinsman” represents the Law of Moses. The law *could* not redeem Naomi (Israel), and *could* not and *would* not redeem Ruth (a Gentile).



The Allegory of Ruth:

Boaz represents God's grace in the person of Jesus Christ, **In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace. (Eph. 1:7)**



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