

RUBIES FROM RUTH

by

William G. Heslop, D.D., Litt., S.D.

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CHAPTER FIVE

EXPOSITION: RUTH FOUR

THE GATE

Legal decisions were given by the elders at “**the gate.**” The greater part of the business of the town was transacted at “**the gate.**”

- That gate had seen Elimelech in his happiest days and hours.
- That gate had also seen him depart for the land of Moab.
- That gate had seen the return of Naomi, now poor and desolate.
- That gate had seen Ruth pass to and fro as she pursued her tasks as a reaper in the fields.
- That gate had witnessed the gathering of the gossipers as they rehearsed the story of Elimelech, Naomi and the Gentile widow and stranger Ruth.

It was most fitting that the gate should see the end of this sacred drama.

“I CANNOT REDEEM LEST” (4:6)

Self-sacrifice is self-saving and self-sanctifying. Self-seeking and self-loving is self-destruction. Orpah went back to Moab, to her people and to her gods, and she is not heard of any more. Ruth counted the cost, paid the price, sanctified herself and she stands honored and exalted among Old Testament saints; and thousands of sweet babies in little baskets have been named after her. Her name has been carved in the Hall of Fame of human hearts in all nations. The conceited kinsman who was afraid lest his name should perish is left nameless, while Boaz is held in everlasting honor and finds a place in the Book of Life.

“The goel had the right of redeeming the inheritance of the person; of marrying the widow; and of avenging the death. (See Leviticus 25:25-31, 47-55; Deuteronomy 25:5-10).” —*Spk. Com.*

“SO HE DREW OFF HIS SHOE”

In Oriental lands the wearing of shoes distinguished the rich from the poor and the sons from the slaves. The father put shoes on the feet of his prodigal and thus accepted him as a son and restored him to all the privileges of sonship again. Stepping upon a piece of land was equal to possession, and taking off the shoe was a sign of the transfer of this land and people to Boaz.

That which was lost by Elimelech was purchased, saved and restored by Boaz.

“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” (Ruth 4:7).

“Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you, as I said unto Moses” (Joshua 1:3).

The shoe evidently symbolized a possession. To surrender the shoe was a sign of the surrender of the possession. In stripping himself of his shoe he transferred the land to Boaz.

“HE DREW OFF HIS SHOE” (4:8)

The shoe symbolized a present possession. When the kinsman pulled off his shoe and gave it to Boaz, he surrendered all claims to all possessions about which they had met at the gate.

“THE MOABITNESS”

Boaz was not ashamed of his bride. Christ is not ashamed to call us brethren now, and if we are among the bridehood saints, our very past, in contrast with the purchased and purified present, shall become a source of satisfaction to Him who has redeemed us at such tremendous cost. Boaz purchased the field and with the purchase of the field obtained the pearl. Ruth became his happy, glad, rejoicing bride.

“RACHEL AND LEAH”

The whole Israelitish nation came from Jacob, and directly or indirectly through Rachel and Leah.

Three million Hebrews left Egypt under the leadership of Moses. After the death of Solomon the kingdom was divided and Israel was finally taken captive of Assyria, while Judah (the Jews) was taken captive to Babylon.

After 3,000 years of checkered history, there are in the world today no less than 18,000,000 Jews, all of whom are the direct descendants of Rachel and Leah. Babylon is gone, the glory of Greece is gone, the old Roman Empire is gone, but the children of Rachel and Leah are as distinct a people as they were in the days of Jacob their father.

“The Lord make the woman like Rachel and Leah,” is thus a prophecy dealing with the glorious fruitful future of Ruth (4:17), and also of the bride of Christ, of whom Ruth was a type.

The fruitfulness and usefulness of the bride of Christ will in reality just begin after the rapture of the saints and the marriage supper of the Lamb. From her home in the New Jerusalem, the glorified bride of Christ shall wing her winsome way throughout the universe and reign and rule with Christ forever.

“DO THOU WORTHILY IN EPHRATAH”

(1) The word Ephratah means “*fruitful*,” another prophecy of the great fruitfulness of Ruth. How these profound prophecies were in part fulfilled may be seen from the fact that Obed, the son of Ruth, was the direct ancestor of Jesse, the father of David (17-22).

(2) The word worthily which literally means *power and riches* is another prophecy of the great wealth and power of the Jews. How this prophecy has been fulfilled, also in part, may be seen by remembering that the Jews today have most of the world’s wealth in their hands.

Boaz, whose name means “*strength*,” the lord of the harvest, the mighty man of wealth, the true Goel and near-kinsman, presents a striking picture of our Lord Jesus Christ. Boaz met and settled the claims of the holy law of God, both upon the person of Ruth (Gentiles), and upon the property of Elimelech (the Jews).

Boaz bravely pleaded the cause of Ruth, purchased her and made her his possession, captured her affections, won her love and united her to himself by marrying her.

Ruth, like Rahab, was excluded by law and nature from the congregation of the Lord, but through grace and adoption was included in the line of the Redeemer. Thus the Gentile Ruth was made a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree. The Moabitish maiden, through an utter, complete, unreserved and reckless abandonment became one with the Mighty Man of Bethlehem.

“As a Sinner She Frequented His House.
As a Stranger She Found His Grace.
As a Daughter She Felt His Love.
As a Gleaner She Followed His Word.
As a Worshiper She Fell at His Feet.
As a Handmaiden She Fed at His Table.
As a Bride She Finished His Plan.”

Thank God for the rich little book of Ruth! Had we the book of Judges alone, we would have concluded that crime had conquered and sin prevailed.

The book of Ruth discloses to us the purity and piety, sacrifice and selflessness, gentleness and justice, helpfulness and holiness flourishing amid the foul-smelling scenes of war, strife and bloodshed.

If the enemy of souls was busy causing the people of God to backslide, God was also busy calling the Gentiles and bringing them to Canaan and rest.

“THE HOUSE OF PHAREZ”

Pharez was the son of Judah and a direct ancestor of Boaz.

Jesse, David, Solomon, Zerubbabel and Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, the King of the Jews and the Redeemer of the race. Is it not wonderful beyond all words to describe to see how these words of the people and elders in the gate have been and are being so minutely fulfilled?

“SO BOAZ TOOK RUTH”

The climax is reached, and Ruth’s patience and labor are richly rewarded. Ruth now possesses all. Ruth:

- (1) a stranger,
- (2) destitute,
- (3) a Gentile,
- (4) bids farewell to her past;
- (5) enters Canaan;
- (6) possesses the land;
- (7) dwells in Bethlehem;
- (8) serves in the field;
- (9) helps in the harvest;
- (10) feasts with the lord of the harvest;
- (11) obeys his word;
- (12) abandons her all to him;
- (13) keeps clean and anointed;
- (14) supplicates;
- (15) rests in faith at his feet; and
- (16) becomes his happy bride.

The house of Elimelech (*Israel*) was perishing. It was saved by Boaz (*Christ*) marrying Ruth (*the Gentile bride*), who in Moab was once destitute, unfruitful, helpless and hopeless. By Ruth (*the Gentile bride*), through Boaz (*Christ*), Naomi (*restored Israel*) is built up. Both Naomi and Ruth received “**the far more exceeding abundant.**” Everyone praises and blesses the now beautiful Ruth who becomes honored and exalted forevermore. Selah!

Among the four women mentioned in the genealogy of Christ there are:

- (1) Rahab, the redeemed harlot;
- (2) Bathsheba, the redeemed adulteress; and
- (3) Ruth the redeemed Moabitess.

Ruth is the most complete type of the bride of Christ to be found in the Bible:

- (1) Ruth deciding to leave Moab;
- (2) Ruth leaving her past and separating herself;
- (3) Ruth entering Canaan;
- (4) Ruth possessing the land;
- (5) Ruth serving in the field and helping in the harvest;
- (6) Ruth abandoning herself to the lord of the harvest;

- (7) Ruth resting;
- (8) Ruth depending upon and trusting in the Bethlehemite who is able to redeem;
- (9) Ruth rewarded;
- (10) Ruth the bride, fruitful and happy.

The story of Ruth is one of the choicest and one of the most lasting of all literature. It is a love epic that has fascinated millions in past ages and which has lost none of its charm for us today.

To think of the book of Ruth is to think of Ruth and Boaz. Boaz! Ruth! Boaz and Ruth! These two constituted a highway for God.

- Ruth, a Moabitess, of an accursed race, and Boaz, an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no guile.
- Ruth a Gentile and Boaz a Hebrew.
- Ruth a penniless widow and Boaz a mighty man of wealth.

Boaz took Ruth. What a picture! What a contrast! Poverty need not hinder saintship nor high destiny. Wealth is not necessarily a hindrance to holiness. Holiness, happiness and wealth go hand in hand with Boaz and Ruth. Circumstances neither make nor mar saintship. Cribbed, cabined and confined in prison, Paul was a saint, while Ananias and Sapphira were sinners with wealth and freedom.

Boaz was a beautiful type of Christ:

- (1) a great giver of grace, **“Let me go after him in whose sight I shall find grace”**; **“Why have I found grace in thine eyes?”** (2:2; 2:10);
- (2) a secret provider in service, **“Let fall also some of the handfuls of purpose for her”** (2:16);
- (3) a kind and kingly kinsman, **“Blessed be he . . . who hath not left off his kindness to the living and the dead”** (2:20);
- (4) a redeemer who gives rest, **“Shall I not seek rest for thee?”** (3:1); **“She lay at his feet”** (3:14);
- (5) a purchaser of all lost property, **“I have bought all”** (4:9); **“Ruth . . . have I purchased”** (4:10);
- (6) a restorer of life and health, **“He shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age”** (4:15);
- (7) a happy bridegroom, **“So Boaz took Ruth”** (4:13).

“BLESSED BE THE LORD”

The book of Ruth has a very sad beginning but a very happy ending. **“Blessed be the Lord.”** It begins in the days when the Judges ruled and God was ruled out. It begins with a famine and in the first chapter there are three funerals, but it ends with a romance, a happy marriage and a smiling boy in a baby basket and a **“Blessed be the Lord.”**

Crooked things at last are made straight, rough places are made plain and all hearts are happy. The Bible opens with a Paradise below and ends with a Paradise above. **“Blessed be the Lord.”**

There is a Paradise at both ends of God's Book. Sobbing ceases. Tears are wiped away. Death is destroyed and the universe joins happily in the Hallelujah Chorus, "**Blessed be the Lord.**"

"A NOURISHER OF THINE OLD AGE"

(1) Through the backsliding of the Jews (Elimelech and Naomi) salvation came to the Gentiles (Ruth).

(2) Through the salvation and sanctification of Ruth (Gentiles) and her consequent marriage to Boaz, salvation came to the Jews.

"He shall be a restorer of thy life, and a nourisher of thine old age." "Have they stumbled that they should fall? God forbid: but rather through their fall salvation is come unto the Gentiles" (Romans 11:11).

Our Boaz (Christ) is yet to take unto Himself His bride, and then full restoration, life, health and happiness shall come to both Jews and Gentiles.

"AND BOAZ BEGAT OBED"

The book of Ruth is a classic among stories of lovers and love. It contains all the elements of true love for all time—love which overcomes prejudice, love which sacrifices itself and risks it's all for the lover, love purified and sanctified by true religion, love which ends in happy marriage and home, sweet home.

Obed means "to serve and to worship."

There are eight principal characters in the book of Ruth, and volumes could be written on each character.

1. Elimelech, whose name means "*My God is King*"
2. Naomi, "*pleasant*"
3. Mahlon, "*sick, infirm*"
4. Chilion, "*pinning, wasting*"
5. Orpah, "*a faun, empty*"
6. Ruth, "*satisfied*"
7. Boaz, "*strength*"
8. Obed, "*servicing*"

"BETTER . . . THAN SEVEN SONS (4:15)

If Naomi had been blessed with seven sons, they probably would have married and scattered and settled in their own homes, whereas Ruth clave unto her and she was preserved alive and restored.

“AND NAOMI . . . BECAME NURSE”

The baby Obed in the arms of its affectionate grandmother becomes the restorer of her life and a nourisher of her old age. A new interest in life grips the heart of the happy Naomi. Thank God, she returned to Canaan and Bethlehem-Judah.

“BOAZ . . . OBED . . . DAVID”

David the great king descended from two Gentile women—Rahab and Ruth. Jesus, the greater King and Son of David, traced His human lineage through this same line with the addition of one other woman—Bathsheba. Oh! the all inclusive conquering grace and condescension of Christ. Linking Himself with the worst of sinners and the poorest of the race, He is able to reach and redeem them all.

Think of it!—Rahab, Bathsheba, Ruth and Mary.

“We may learn from the story of Ruth that self-sacrifice is self-saving, and that self-seeking is self-loving. Orpah went back to Moab, and she is heard of no more. Ruth clave to Naomi, and she is canonized among the Old Testament saints, and has a place among the ancestors of our Lord. The nameless kinsman was afraid lest his name should perish while he was seeking to perpetuate Mahlon’s, and it has perished in spite of his refusal. Boaz did what he declined, and lo! his name stands in everlasting honor, on the first page of the New Testament.”—William M. Taylor. The thrilling love story of the book of Ruth has fascinated millions, and although thirty centuries have come and gone, it has lost none of its charms.

The story is a classic because it contains all the elements which make up the average human heart and life story. Here, sorrow is turned to singing, purity overcomes prejudice, lust is conquered by love, and self-sacrifice is richly rewarded in both the hero and heroine. Here, true love is sanctified by pure religion, and a happy courtship ends in a happy marriage; and before the sublime story closes we catch a glimpse of a baby’s basket and hear the sweet symphony of a baby’s cooing song.

The climax is reached as we remember that coursing through the veins of the babe of Ruth and Boaz is the blood of David’s greater Son, the Saviour of the world. Ruth marched straight forward from the miserable land of Moab to the line of the Messiah. Ruth committed herself to Boaz believing that he was able to keep that which she had committed unto him (II Tim. 1:12). She committed her way unto Boaz, trusted also in him and he brought things to pass (Psalm 37:5). She cast her burden upon Boaz, believing that he cared and that he would conquer and bless. She was not disappointed.

~ end of chapter 5 ~

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