

RUBIES FROM RUTH

by

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

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CHAPTER FOUR

EXPOSITION: RUTH THREE

“SEEK REST”

Finding grace and seeking rest constitute two of the key expressions of the charming book of Ruth.

- Grace (2:2) is the unmerited favor of God and is the first real need of all mankind.
- Seeking rest in a world of unrest and sin should be the one supreme business of all who have found grace.

Ruth found rest in Canaan (*sanctification*), rest in the fields of Boaz (*service*), and rest at the feet of one she loved (*submission*).

Boaz was a type of Christ in that he bestowed grace on a Gentile stranger, welcomed her into his service, became a kinsman-redeemer, purchased her at great sacrifice and became the restorer of that which had been lost.

“REST”

Before Ruth may find perfect rest she must first of all leave Moab, enter Canaan, work in the field, keep clean and under the anointing, enjoy continued fellowship with, and abandon herself utterly to, the lord of the harvest.

There are several kinds of rest mentioned in the Bible.

- The rest of forgiveness or pardon from past sins: “**Come unto me, and I will give you rest.**”
- The rest of sanctification or purity: “**Take my yoke upon you, and learn . . . and ye shall find rest unto your souls**” (Matthew 11:28-30).
- The rest as the result of marriage.

Nothing short of marriage to Boaz could completely satisfy the loving and lovable, beautiful and glamorous gleaner, Ruth. “**Shall I not seek rest for thee?**”

Others may be satisfied with less than this, but not Ruth.

“BEHOLD, HE WINNOWETH BARLEY”

“I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but . . . he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire: whose fan is in his hand” (Matthew 3:11-12).

The mighty Boaz was winnowing barley in the threshing floor. That which was light, chaffy, frivolous and empty must be winnowed and fanned away. The threshing floor was a large open space with only a roof overhead to shelter the servants from the hot sun in midday, as well as to provide a place for the heaps of grain after threshing. In the middle of this open space, Boaz slept.

Ruth was instructed to go down quietly to this open place and abandon herself to Boaz. She was also instructed to wash herself, anoint herself, dress in suitable apparel, abandon herself in faith and hope for all the future, and obey implicitly and exactly the word of Boaz.

If we would be among the bridehood saints we, too, must keep clean outwardly, stay under the anointing of the Holy Spirit inwardly, adorn ourselves as becometh saints, and dress as becometh disciples, for these are each deciding factors constituting membership among the bridehood saints. We must abandon our future fully to our Boaz and obey His Word and will (vv. 1-4).

“BEHOLD, HE WINNOWETH BARLEY TONIGHT”

No times are so wild and wicked but that in them may be found quiet corners, green pastures and peaceful homes carried on in holy isolation from the tumult around. Despite the bloody and turbulent scene of strife and war as depicted in the book of Judges, here in the book of Ruth, Boaz stands amid his heaps of corn and no war disturbs or distracts. God has never left Himself without a witness, and there are seven thousand today who have not bowed to Baal.

“WASH THYSELF”

Ruth had obtained an inheritance in Canaan land, but she must also maintain her inheritance. She must keep outwardly clean, sweet and pure. She must keep clean. Her hands, her ears, her eyes and her lips must be kept clean, spotless and undefiled. **“Wash thyself.”**

“ANOINT THEE”

It is one thing to enter the Canaan land of perfect love and be filled with the Holy Spirit; it is quite another thing to keep the anointing of the Spirit, Only by walking in the light may the anointing be ours continually. **“Anoint thee.”**

“PUT THY RAIMENT UPON THEE”

Raiment has much to do with religion. Modest apparel is necessary if unbroken friendship with Boaz is to be maintained. Nudity is of the Devil. Exposing of the body is wicked, sinful and devilish. Immodest dress or undress is to be condemned as Satanic and corrupting. We must dress right if we would please our Boaz.

Dress is a sure index to the condition of the mind and the state of the heart. To qualify as bridehood saints we must suitably attire ourselves and thus seek to please our coming Bridegroom.

“GET THEE DOWN TO THE FLOOR”

Instructed by Naomi and encouraged by Boaz, Ruth presented herself at the threshing floor of the man of wealth and wisdom. **“The floor,”** was a large open barn where masters, servants, water carriers and reapers slept in harvest time. Ruth went down to this threshing floor and Boaz testifies to the virtue and modesty of the trustful maid, praises her conduct and promises to plead her cause. Ruth acts in faith and obedience. In full surrender and entire consecration she makes room for bigger blessing. Washed, anointed, clothed, believing, trustful and with holy boldness she presses her claim and conquers.

“HE WILL TELL THEE WHAT THOU SHALT DO”

“Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.” “Happy are ye if ye do whatsoever I command you.”

“SHE CAME SOFTLY, AND UNCOVERED HIS FEET”

Ruth abandoned herself implicitly and unreservedly to Boaz. She died to the thoughts and possible evil surmisings of the other servants, died to the possible slanderings of the gossipers, and resolutely, quietly, unpretentiously laid her down at the feet of Boaz, trusting her present, her future and her all to his loving, tender care. She was satisfied that lasting rest could only be obtained at the feet of Boaz. In that, Mary, the sister of Martha, and Ruth were of one mind and heart.

“I AM RUTH”

Jacob confessed to the truth when he said, **“I am Jacob”** (*“supplanter”*), and Ruth at the feet of Boaz also truthfully confessed, **“I am Ruth”** (*“satisfied”*). At the feet of Boaz she was the satisfied stranger. Risking her all to become the bride of Boaz, in perfect trust and as a promise and pledge of protection (see Ezekiel 16:8), she prays him to cover her. Ruth sought the love, the protection and the support of Boaz and in simple faith committed her all into his safe care and keeping. She risked all and received all (read verse 11).

“I AM RUTH THINE HANDMAID”

In order to become the beautiful bride of the wealthy Boaz Ruth must—

1. Keep herself clean—**“Wash thyself therefore”** (3:3);
2. Keep under the anointing—**“Anoint thee”** (3:3);
3. Abandon herself in perfect trust to Boaz—**“She lay down”** (3:4).

Having implicitly and fully obeyed instructions, Ruth confesses herself to be the handmaid of Boaz.

She is not now Ruth the Moabitess, nor Ruth the Gentile stranger, nor Ruth the weeping widow, nor Ruth the damsel of Moab, but “**Ruth thine handmaid.**”

“SPREAD THY SKIRT” (3:9)

To spread a skirt over one in the Orient is a symbol of protection and modesty. The book of Ruth is filled with Oriental pictures of everyday life.

In his treatment of the Gentile stranger, Boaz was acting in strict obedience to the Deuteronomic law.

His words to Ruth were words of comfort and kindness. He knew all about her and her love for Naomi, as well as her labor in the field. Urging her to stay in his field, he secretly and graciously provided for her. She gleaned in the field and gloried in Boaz under whose wing she had trusted.

Typically, the book of Ruth sets forth—

1. Decision for Christ—Chapter One
2. Meeting with Christ—Chapter Two
3. Resting in Christ—Chapter Three
4. Union with Christ—Chapter Four

The book of Ruth is a sacred love story with a symbolic significance.

A famine (*test*) in Bethlehem (“*house of bread*”) drives Elimelech (“*God is my King*”) to Moab (*land of ease, relations and false religion*). Amid false gods and godless relations, Elimelech dies. His two sons also die outside of their inheritance (*Canaan*). Naomi (“*pleasant*”) with Ruth (“*satisfied*”) returns to Bethlehem where Ruth meets Boaz (“*in him is strength*”), serves in his field (*service*), and finally becomes his bride, restoring Naomi (*Jews*) and all that was lost.

The Moabite shut out by law is admitted by grace, and Ruth not only finds free grace but complete rest in Boaz (*Christ*). Elimelech the Hebrew forsook the Lord and died, while Ruth the Gentile “**turned to God from idols to serve the living and true God.**”

The way of Elimelech seemed right unto him, but it was the way of death for him and also for his children. Ruth, as a Gentile who was once afar off, is brought nigh and becomes a fellow-heir, for in Christ there is neither Gentile nor Jew.

“SPREAD THY SKIRT OVER THINE HANDMAID”

A greater than Boaz is represented here. Lord of the Harvest and a Mighty Man of Valor, our Boaz takes notice of us, speaks comfortably to us, treats us kindly; and when in penitence and humility we come to Him, and stretch ourselves at His pierced feet and plead with Him to spread over us the crimson mantle of His redeeming and protecting love, how immediate is His response. Bless His Name!

“THOU ART A VIRTUOUS WOMAN”

All the world is interested when strength and beauty meet, as they did in Boaz and Ruth. Especially is this so when kinship of high and holy character and conduct is involved.

The language of Boaz to his reapers, “**The Lord be with thee,**” reveals him as a man of God. His question to his servant, “**Whose damsel is this?**” was a further revelation of his interest, while his counsel to the beautiful young maiden, “**Abide here fast by my maidens,**” is a proof of his concern for her welfare.

The present-day critic takes pleasure in pointing out any place in the Bible where any man or woman may have erred from the paths of purity and virtue, but passes over the book of Ruth because it affords him no ground for criticism. Boaz was a godly man, and Ruth was a virtuous woman.

“Boaz probably slept upon a mat or skin; Ruth lay crosswise at his feet—a position in which Eastern servants frequently sleep in the same chamber or tent, with their master; and if they want a covering, custom allows them that benefit from part of the covering on their master’s bed.”—Jamieson.

“I WILL REDEEM”

Boaz, the mighty and wealthy, the lord of the harvest, the near-kinsman, the true performing Goel, meets and settles the claims of the law of God, makes a new covenant with new and better promises, pleads the cause of a sinner and a stranger, purchases the penniless Ruth and makes her his own possession, draws her into close union with himself, and finally makes her his beautiful and happy bride.

True to his word (3:11), Boaz went up to the gate which was the place of justice and judgment, sat down, called for the jury and presented his case (4:1-2). The nearest of kin (man) was willing to redeem but unable to do so (4:6), and hence Boaz, the next near-kinsman, proved both his willingness and ability and purchased all that was Elimelech’s, Chilion’s and Mahlon’s.

Man may be willing to redeem but he lacks the loving interest, the unselfishness, the power and ability to do so (1:6), and hence the mighty-to-save and strong-to-deliver Boaz purchases the land and the people and becomes the redeemer and restorer. Five times in chapter 4 the word “**redeem**” occurs. It is indeed a redemption chapter.

BOAZ

1. Lord of the harvest
2. Powerful and rich
3. Compassionate and kind
4. Interested in both Jews (Naomi) and Gentiles (Ruth)
5. Provides for all
6. Welcomes Ruth into his service
7. Speaks comfort to her heart

8. Purchased Ruth for himself
9. Covered her with his robe
10. Protected her and blessed her
11. Redeemed her fully and completely
12. Unites her to himself in marriage

Boaz was a true-blue Hebrew and faithful to the Word of God as given to Moses. Boaz was true to His Book. The near-kinsman, however, was considerate only of himself and his own selfish interests. He could not and would not redeem because love was lacking for either God or man.

Boaz buys the land and redeems Ruth because he is both able and willing. Boaz is mighty to save and strong to deliver. Neither Naomi nor Ruth could redeem either themselves or the land. They were helpless. How like the human race! And Boaz!—how like our loving Lord, our Kinsman-Redeemer, who not only bought the field, but purchased us with His own blood! What marvelous grace! What wonderful love! What matchless condescension! Boaz buys Ruth the Moabitess.

He links himself forever with a despised race, makes himself kin of one of the poorest and worst of sinners. Boaz and Ruth! Boaz and Obed! Boaz and David! Boaz and Ruth and Christ!

~ end of chapter 4 ~

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