

**An Unlikely Bride**

Ruth 1:1-5

Today, we begin a new series (12 Lessons) on the four-chapter book of the Old Testament called Ruth. Ruth is a true love story. It's about a Moabite woman named Ruth, and a Hebrew man named Boaz. But more importantly, it pictures God's grace to you through our **Kinsman Redeemer**, the Lord Jesus Christ. The kinsman or "close relative" has the right to buy back what was lost. The word kinsman is mentioned 10 times in Ruth (2:1,20; 3:9,12,13; 4:1,3,6,8,14). The Law of Kinsman Redemption is in the Hebrew Law.

"If one of your fellow Israelites becomes poor and sells some of their property, **their nearest relative is to come and redeem what they have sold.**" (Lev. 25:25).

Jesus came to redeem His people (Matt. 1:21). Believers in Jesus Christ, both males, and females are *the Bride of Christ* (Jn. 3:29; Rev. 22:17; Eph. 5:32). We'll all see ourselves in *Ruth*, an unlikely bride of Boaz.

**I. Ruth came to know Boaz through God's providence and direction (vs. 1-2).**

The story of Ruth begins with the introduction of a family who lived in the small town of Bethlehem.

**A. Ruth begins in the days when the judges ruled** (1450 to 1050 BC). This is the 400-year time period when Israel was ruled by judges like Gideon, Deborah, Samson, and others (the book of Judges).

**B. Elimelech lived in Bethlehem with his wife Naomi and their two sons** (Mahlon and Kilion).

The name Elimelech means "God is King," and Naomi means "sweet and pleasant." This Hebrew family lived in the Promised Land with Yahweh as their king. Names are important in Scripture.

**C. There came a famine in the land of Bethlehem.**

Bethlehem means "House of Bread," and of course, it became the birthplace of the Bread of Life. Even among God's people in the very place where the Bread of Life resides, famines can come.

**D. Elimelech took his family on a trip to Moab to find food.**

Ever commentator states this journey was a mistake. Moab was an enemy to Israel. Leaving the town of Bethlehem and going to Moab, they say, was a mistake. Yet Ruth met Boaz because of it. Ruth was a Moabite. She was a foreigner and a stranger to the things of God. Yet, she wed Boaz.

**Principle:** God providentially brings you to Christ using all your experiences, both good and bad.

**II. Ruth came to know Boaz during her personal pain and difficulties (vs. 3-5).**

When Ruth was a young Moabite woman, this Hebrew family from Bethlehem settled nearby. It was a custom that courtship took place near "wells." It could be she met Mahlon at the local water well. Ruth's Hebrew husband died after ten years of marriage. One can only imagine the ancestors of Lot (the Moabites) rejecting Ruth for marrying a Hebrew. Then, after her Hebrew father-in-law and her Hebrew husband both died, Ruth had nobody left but her Hebrew mother-in-law Naomi and her sister-in-law Orpah. So the decision is made to return to Bethlehem with Naomi (v.6). I like to remind people that the storms of your life are usually preparatory to the salvation of your life. Temporal difficulties are typically the means of eternal deliverance.

**III. Ruth came to know Boaz because of God's purposes and decrees (4:21-22).**

"Salmon (was) the father of Boaz, Boaz the father of Obed, Obed the father of Jesse, and Jesse (was) the father of David." (Ruth 4:21-22). These are the last two verses of the book of Ruth. I know I am jumping to the end of the book, but when you see how a loving, gracious God take a stranger, a Moabite woman, into His family, and they are the great-grandparents of David, and also listed in the genealogy of Jesus, then you can understand how God takes unlikely people (like you) for Himself.