

SEARCHING FOR CHRIST IN THE BOOK OF RUTH THE ROMANCE OF REDEMPTION YAHWEH'S PREPARATION FOR HIS TRUE KING

Ruth, chapter 3 | Audacious Asking and Assured Acceptance

I | INTRODUCTION / CONNECTIONS / CONTEXT

1 / We don't know who the human writer and narrator of this story was, but what we DO know is that **"the Spirit of Christ Himself was in him"** [to paraphrase **1 Peter 1.10-12**]. Jesus Christ Himself is inspiring the human writer and narrator to *'pre-enact'* what He Himself would do in generations to come – when He would come into our world through this very same 'little town of Bethlehem' to be our Redeemer [see **Micah 5.2**]. *See also Luke 2.38—and all the other related NT texts to 'Redeemer / redemption'...*

2 / Not only would God's Redeemer come from the tribe of Judah and be born in the town of Bethlehem, but He would also be a direct royal descendent of King David. **Isaiah 11.10: In that day the root of Jesse, who shall stand as a signal for the peoples—of Him shall the nations inquire, and His resting place shall be glorious.** HEADS UP: this promise of **'rest'** is one of the premises of **Ruth, ch 3 [v 1]**.

3 / Paul goes back to get this verse and writes it again in **Romans 15.12** where he is exulting in God's forethought and fore-planning to bring His Redeemer into the world to save not just Israelites and Jews, but peoples from ALL the nations [as He will do here in our lesson, i.e. Ruth]. *And again Isaiah says, 'The root of Jesse will come, even He who arises to rule the Gentiles; in Him will the Gentiles hope.'*

4 / NOW, what we are going to witness here in **Ruth, chapter 3**, is a picture of Jesus Christ committing to assume the role of Redeemer of His people and assuming the responsibility of redeeming us for Himself – to belong to Him! See, e.g. **Titus 2.11-14, et. al.**

5 / Boaz is intentionally presented to us here as a pointer to Christ. He may not be a formal type of Christ [a 'type' must be formally recognized and specifically named as such in the New Testament], but Boaz is certainly a 'motif' or [as I like to call it] a *'pre-enactment'* of Christ. And we know that Boaz is a pre-enactment of Jesus Christ as our Redeemer because the writer/narrator repeatedly emphasizes that Boaz is **'a near relative, a redeemer'** [see **2.20; 3.9; 4.4**]

6 / So, when we come here to **chapter 3**, we are going to witness Boaz's commitment to redeem Elimelech's estate for Naomi, and in so doing, he will also commit to marry Ruth and raise up a family in the name of Mahlon, Ruth's deceased husband. In this way, he will redeem their family from dying out [**'be cut off' ch 4.10**].

7 / AND, by perpetuating Elimelech and Mahlon through Ruth, Boaz will become the great-grandfather of David – who is the human forefather and progenitor of Jesus Christ! **ch 4.18-22**

II | SO – HOW DOES BOAZ BECOME THE 'REDEEMER'?

1 / I'm going to give **chapter 3** the theme of *Audacious Asking* – because Ruth's proposal to Boaz to marry her is one of the most **audacious askings** in all of Scripture! [NOTE: *'audacious' means: bold, daring, fearless, willing to take big risks!*] And since Boaz is the 'pre-enactment' of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, then it is consistent with his character *to encourage audacious asking and agree to granting audacious requests! Hence...the second part of our lesson title: "Assured Acceptance"!*

2 / Jesus certainly did! **Matthew 7.7-11: 'ask and you shall receive' / Matthew 8.1-3: "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean..." "I will...!" / Mark 10.46-52: To Bartimaeus: "What do you want me to do for you?" / Luke 11.1-13: the parable of the insistent neighbor / Luke 18.1-9: the parable of the insistent widow.**

3 / So, what we're going to do is work our way through **Ruth chapter 3**. And, yes, we will focus on Boaz's gracious consent—his 'assured acceptance'—to be Naomi's and Ruth's redeemer ... but we will also focus on the audacity of Ruth's way of asking him.

4 / We are going to cast Ruth as a woman of great faith in her redeemer. *And we want to learn to pray, ask, and expect great graces from our Redeemer just as Ruth did from hers.*

5 / I'm going to present us with six facets of Ruth's faith in Boaz as they play out in the story ... and then challenge us to act toward Christ, our Redeemer, with these same acts of faith. [NOTE: these six 'facets of great faith' are borrowed from Christopher Ash's excellent little commentary *Teaching Ruth & Esther*; published jointly by Christian Focus / Proclamation Truth Resources.]

6 / **Chapter 3 can be called Act 3 of this Drama of Redemption. And Act 3 can be broken down into 3 scenes:**

SCENE 1, vv 1-5, begins in their house again

SCENE 2, vv 6-15, will go to the threshing floor

SCENE 3, vv 16-18, will be back in the house

1 | read vv 1-5 | GREAT FAITH IS INTENTIONAL

1 / The '*rest*' that Naomi wants to find for Ruth is *the rest of a permanent family and home—a husband who will love her and provide for her safety, sustenance, and security*. They are still without their family property. For the past several weeks – maybe months – they have been living off of the gleanings Ruth has been bringing home from Boaz's field. *But, what about the future? For Ruth? For Naomi?*

2 / Boaz is, after all, a close relative and redeemer, **ch 2.20**, and he is fully qualified as such to redeem or 'buy back' Elimelech's 'hocked' property and estate which he had 'sold off' when they first went to Moab seeking relief from the famine in Bethlehem [see **ch 1.1**].

3 / So, Naomi proposes a daring plan: Ruth will go to the threshing floor and propose to Boaz that he marry her! Look at all these intentional preparations: *[1] wash yourself; [2] anoint yourself* [with perfumed oils]; *[3] put on a cloak-garment* [this may have been an instruction to take off her former widow's / mourning garments and assume her place among the eligible women for marriage]; *[4] go to the threshing floor – but remain hidden until after the evening meal and festivities; [5] After Boaz retires, she is to go where he is lying down, remove the covers from the lower parts of his legs, and lie down beside his legs and feet*. We need to note here also that everything is intentionally planned with chastity and discretion...

4 / Naomi is so confident that Boaz will comply with this proposal, that she tells Ruth: "...he will tell you **what to do.**" Here, the emphasis heavily points to their dependence upon Boaz's willingness to redeem.

5 / Ruth obediently and trustingly consents to carry out this plan in full: "**All that you say I will do.**"

6 / **You must take Christ at His word and ask Him for His grace! "Whoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved!"**

2 | read vv 6-7 | GREAT FAITH IS VULNERABLE

1 / I don't know if we can even begin to recognize and appreciate what a risk Ruth is taking here: *she is Moabite woman; she runs the risk of being seen as a prostitute soliciting illicit services; she runs the risk of being rejected; she runs the risk of being publicly shamed and shunned for her 'perceived and imputed improprieties.'* NOTE: everything Ruth did was risky—but not one act was 'risque'!

2 / But she casts herself upon the good character and '*mercy / hesed*' of Boaz – believing that he will respect her need and her request.

3 / **We live in abject dependence upon the Grace of Jesus Christ, our Redeemer – but we believe in His mercy and grace! We have no one else to go to – we need none other! "All that the Father gives me shall come to me; and whoever comes to me shall not be cast out!"**

3 | read vv 8-9 | GREAT FAITH IS INTIMATE & PERSONAL

1 / Sometime during the night, Boaz was startled awake – could have been shivering from the night air or could have been delayed reactions to the movements at his feet.

2 / What he discovered was a woman sleeping at his feet, without recognizing her! ***“Who are you!”***

3 / Notice how the narrator continues to cast everything in the ambience of darkness and secrecy—creating and building up the tension of uncertainty of outcome: ***‘tonight’; ‘do not make yourself known to the man’; ‘at the end of the heap of grain’; ‘she came softly’; ‘at midnight.’*** This is not out in the open field in broad daylight; this is just the two of them with no one else even knowing or participating...

4 / Faith is always intensely intimate and personal – a personal transaction of love and trust with Jesus Christ, casting ourselves upon His promised Grace, love, and ‘assured acceptance’!

5 / Ruth identifies herself by her name: ***“I am Ruth”***... she takes the place of a *‘servant’*—even a foreigner, not a citizen, not an employee—with no rights to request anything at all. [compare Matthew 15.21-28]

6 / And yet, she proposes to Boaz that he marry her! ***“Spread your wings over your servant, for you are a redeemer!”*** The ‘wings’ were the lower portions of his outer cloak or the blanket with which he was covering himself for sleep. This was an act of engagement to marry—to take Ruth to himself—to assume the responsibility to take care of her every need! see *Ezekiel 16.8-10*

7 / Jesus Christ invites you into His own life – into His family – into His very heart! ***“As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God!”*** [John 1.12-13]. This is redemption, adoption to Himself!

4 | read vv 10-11 | GREAT FAITH IS GROUNDED IN COVENANT PROMISES

1 / Faith is our conscious, deliberate, intentional decision to trust that God is both able and willing to do what He has promised to do—and then acting upon that confidence with obedience! [see Romans 4.16-25; 1 Thessalonians 5.24; Hebrews 10.23; et. al.]

2 / We have to recognize that everything that has been going on in this little story is grounded in God’s Word and in the laws He had given to Israel to govern their conduct – every aspect of their lifestyle and conduct: *the gleaning; the expression of charity and hospitality to the poor and disadvantaged; the rights of the redeemer to buy back the property of a close relative and restore it back to their original family...*

3 / Ruth has already made her profession of faith in YAHWEH, the God of Israel [ch 1.16]; Boaz greeted his reapers and farmhands in the name of YAHWEH [ch 2.4]; Boaz had already recognized Ruth’s membership in their family of faith and her personal trust in YAHWEH [ch 2.12].

4 / Boaz also commends Ruth and acknowledges that she has already proven her personal faith in YAHWEH and her commitment to obey and serve and follow Him by the ways she has taken care of her mother-in-law Naomi [ch 3.10-11].

5 / So, Boaz accepts his personal responsibility under God’s law to marry Ruth and have children with her—to restore the family line she lost when Mahlon died! [Leviticus 25.24-55; Deuteronomy 25.5-10]

5 | read vv 12-17 | GREAT FAITH IS EFFECTIVE

1 / The narrator is deliberately crafting his words [under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit] to show us ***that God is the One who is doing through these faithful servants everything they are doing.***

2 / vv 12-13 So – the first response we get from Boaz is: ***“Of course! I will marry you and redeem Elimelech’s property and resume the family line of Mahlon! But, there is a redeemer who is closer to Naomi than I am. We’ll have to see if he wants to claim the right. If he does, I will have to honor the law and the custom and concede to him. But, if he doesn’t – as surely as YAHWEH lives and is faithful [and He is!], I WILL!”***

3 / This is such a beautiful picture, pointer, and pre-enactment of Jesus Christ being willing to obey His Father to come to earth, be born as one of us so He could be like us and close to us – AND REDEEM US! ...except that, of course, in His case – He was the ONLY One qualified to be our Redeemer! [see Hebrews 2.14-16; et. al.]

4 / v 14 They were all up before it was light enough to be seen and recognized. Boaz was always careful and conscientious all through the transactions of the night to be a man of character, integrity, above-board—nothing was ever done that was indecent or inappropriate. He is committed to keeping it that way: ***“Let it not be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.”***

5 / v 15 But Boaz is not going to send her home to Naomi without another abundant blessing. ***“Hold out your shawl...”*** and he filled it with as much of the threshed grain as Ruth could carry home for her and Naomi. *This is so much more than just another hospitable gesture—THIS was Boaz’s ‘dowry’ or ‘pledge’ of his ‘assured acceptance’ of Ruth’s marriage proposal!* If you could call this transaction an ‘engagement,’ this was Boaz’s way to ‘put a ring on it’—promising to follow through with his redemption.

6 / vv 16-17 Naomi is waiting up for Ruth: I really doubt she even slept all night long—*wondering how the night was going? Will Boaz be willing to secure their future? Did she do the right thing sending Ruth out there to the threshing floor in the night with a bunch of men?* [Remember: this was during the days of the Judges [ch 1.1]...]

7 / Ruth gives Naomi her good report – and then shows her the bountiful gift Boaz has sent home with her for them. ***NOTE again how the narrator is crafting his words to show us that God had completely reversed their prospects for the future...*** when Naomi first came back to Bethlehem, her bitter complaint against YAHWEH was: ***“I went away full, and YAHWEH has brought me back empty!”*** [ch 1.20-21]. But here, the narrator puts it in Boaz’s mouth, ***“Don’t go back to your mother-in-law empty-handed...”*** [same word]. ***God has done this! — and this was God’s intention and plan all along!*** ... and not only is He filling up their human and physical provisions, but He is also pre-enacting here how He will send our Redeemer into our world in the *fullness* of time and when He comes, He will be ***“full of grace and truth!”*** ***“For from His fullness we have all received, grace upon grace! [John 1.14, 16].***

8 / We will see the prophetic and Messianic *fullness* Yahweh is preparing for them and us in ch 4.18-21!

6 | read v 18 | GREAT FAITH IS WILLING TO WAIT

1 / Naomi concludes her celebration with her call to wait for Boaz to act. She knows he will be faithful to do all he has promised. **1 Thessalonians 5.24: He who calls you is faithful; He will surely do it!** This is a sterling testimony to Boaz’s faithful integrity—not just his personal character, but also his faithful obedience to his family responsibilities commanded by YAHWEH’s Law.

2 / Naomi’s instructions to Ruth to ***“Wait...”*** were personal to them in that moment, household, and family. But, at the same time, this ***‘waiting’*** is also the prevailing and pervasive attitude of the whole OT community of faithful believers. They were ***‘waiting’*** for their Promised Redeemer. And, they had been ***‘waiting’*** ever since the first promise had been given to Eve after their fall into sin in **Genesis 3.15: I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.** All of these OT provisions for their family ‘redeemers’ were promises, pictures, pointers, ‘pre-enactments’ of the Messianic Redeemer who would come to redeem them from all their enemies [Luke 1.71] and ‘return’ them back to YAHWEH, their God. This whole OT era of ***‘waiting’*** is quintessentially distilled in the testimonies of Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna when their Redeemer finally appeared: ***“And his father Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied, saying, ‘Blessed be the Lord God of Israel, for He has visited and redeemed His people...!’”*** [Luke 1.67-68]; ***“Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him”*** [Luke 2.25]; ***“And there was a prophetess, Anna...And coming in up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of Him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem”*** [Luke 2.36-38].

3 / And, in that very same spirit of waiting in confident, expectant hope, we, too, are ***‘waiting’*** for the full redemption that Jesus Christ will bring us when He comes again! see Romans 8.18-25!

When our Redeemer, Jesus Christ, victoriously proclaimed ***“IT IS FINISHED!”*** ...

He secured for us “an eternal redemption”! [Hebrews 9.25]