

The Book of Ruth

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(1992 Study)

The following notes on the Book of Ruth were compiled from a Bible study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1992. They should be utilized with the following understanding:

1. Each paragraph preceded by “**Comment**” or “**Q**” (an abbreviation for “Question”) was introduced by someone other than Bro. Frank.
2. The original study did not follow a prepared text but was extemporaneous in nature.
3. Although the transcriber tried to faithfully, with the Lord’s help, set forth the thoughts that were presented in the study, the notes are not a verbatim rendering and, therefore, should be considered in that context.
4. Finally, Bro. Frank did not review the notes for possible errors that may have inadvertently entered the text.

With this disclaimer in mind, may the notes be a blessing as a useful study guide.

The Book of Ruth

(Study led by Bro. Frank Shallieu in 1992)

Ruth 1:1 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 Bethlehem-judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he, and his wife, and his two sons.

Ruth 1:2 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 Bethlehem-judah. And they came into the country of Moab, and continued there.

Ruth 1:3 And Elimelech Naomi's husband died; and she was left, and her two sons.

Ruth 1:4 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.

Ruth 1:5 And Mahlon and Chilion died also both of them; and the woman was left of her two sons and her husband.

Because of a famine, Elimelech left Israel with his wife and two sons and went to Moab. Under the Mosaic Law, the Israelites were to stay separate from other people, so this move was a violation. During the ten-year sojourn in Moab, Naomi lost her husband and her two sons.

We will subsequently see that Ruth left Moab, the land of her nativity, to accompany Naomi back to Israel. Her leaving reminds us of the call of Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and go to the Promised Land. Abraham's call is likened to the Christian's being called out of the world to journey to the heavenly Promised Land. Here Ruth, a woman, left her homeland. Psalm 45:10,11 reads: "Hearken, O daughter, and consider, and incline thine ear; forget also thine own people, and thy father's house; So shall the king greatly desire thy beauty: for he is thy Lord; and worship thou him." Notice, "forget ... thine own people, and thy father's house." The call to Abraham was to forsake his kindred and go to a foreign land. He went out in faith and obeyed God.

The Jacob picture is slightly related. Jacob was called a "Syrian" because of a kinsman relationship (Deut. 26:5). In contrast, Abraham and Shem were Hebrews. Joseph, too, went to a foreign land, and a famine later occurred. As prime minister of Egypt, Joseph pictured Jesus, and Pharaoh was a type of God.

Rebekah is another picture. When asked to leave her house, she did so willingly. Again there was a kinsman relationship. She followed Eliezer (representing the Holy Spirit) back to Isaac (a type of Jesus) to marry him. And Ruth eventually married Boaz, who pictures Jesus. Whether for an individual back there or for the Christian in the Gospel Age, to leave one's surroundings in a quest for truth and a search for God is a test of faith that entails sacrifice.

What is the significance of the name Bethlehem-judah? Bethlehem, meaning "house of bread," was a place where priests lived. Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and he is "the Lion of the tribe of Judah" (Rev. 5:5).

The name Elimelech means "God is King." His wife's name, Naomi, signifies "pleasantness," "pleasant one." Mahlon and Chilion were their two sons. Mahlon means "sickly," "one having an infirmity," and the thought of Chilion is "pining" or "wasting." Both of the sons' names

suggest a *process* of illness, a sickly condition. In antitype they represent the Jewish people, the ten-tribe and the two-tribe kingdoms, who rejected Jesus. Jesus said, "Behold, your house is left unto you *desolate*" (Matt. 23:38).

Before the two sons died, they married two Moabite women, Ruth and Orpah. Ruth, whose name means "beauty," is a representation of the Little Flock, specifically *Gentile* Christians. Orpah, signifying "youthful freshness," "fawn," or "neck," represents the Great Company. The consecrated are all wheat, either mature or immature depending on the individual. Orpah pictures the immature wheat, the little sister of the Song of Solomon who has no breasts and hence, spiritually speaking, is not sufficiently developed under the influence of the Old and New Testaments (Song 8:8). Newcomers are nurtured by the Word of God, being breast-fed, as it were, on "the sincere milk of the word" (1 Pet. 2:2). Orpah was "youthful" in this sense, and Lot, also a type of the Great Company, was younger than Abraham, his uncle.

Of course in the Book of Ruth, the chief character is Ruth, but Naomi is almost on the same level, for both had very noble characters. The example of Naomi caused Ruth to love her dearly. Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah were all widows.

Ruth 1:6 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.

When Naomi heard that the famine in Israel was over, she decided to return to her homeland.

Ruth 1:7 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.

Both Orpah and Ruth started on the journey back to Israel with Naomi.

Ruth 1:8 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.

Ruth 1:9 The LORD grant you that ye may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband. Then she kissed them; and they lifted up their voice, and wept.

Ruth 1:10 And they said unto her, Surely we will return with thee unto thy people.

Ruth 1:11 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?

Ruth 1:12 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 tonight, and should also bear sons;

Ruth 1:13 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 1:14 And they lifted up their voice, and wept again: and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law; but Ruth clave unto her.

Naomi tried to use reason and consideration to get Orpah and Ruth to stay in Moab. She said she was too old to have more sons, and even if she married and bore sons, they would have to grow up. Since women could not support themselves in those days, they were dependent on

sympathetic and concerned family members.

Ruth's cleaving to Naomi is very moving. Orpah returned to her homeland, but Ruth's love for Naomi and Naomi's God kept her steadfast in her purpose.

We are reminded of Lot, who accompanied Abraham. When Abraham and Lot are considered together, they represent the Little Flock and the Great Company, respectively. When they parted at Abraham's suggestion because their flocks were too numerous to share the same land, Abraham let Lot choose land first. Lot's choice, which was the Sodom and Gomorrah area prior to its destruction, was fertile and pleasing to the eye; that is, it was the best temporally. The principle expressed in the New Testament is that the love of money is the root of *much* evil; money makes it hard to be a more-than-overcomer. As Jesus said, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God!" (Mark 10:23).

Ruth 1:15 And she said, Behold, thy sister-in-law is gone back unto her people, and unto her gods: return thou after thy sister-in-law.

Ruth 1:16 And Ruth said, Entreat 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:

Naomi's urging Ruth to go back to her people and her gods, as Orpah had done, would seem to be bad advice on the surface, but it brought out Ruth's unwavering determination to accompany Naomi. In this context, "gods" is lowercase. The Hebrew words *El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim* are three different perspectives of God's office.

The Moabites were descendants of Moab. Moab and Ammon were the two sons born to Lot's daughters through their father. Thus there was a relationship with Abraham but not in the direct line. The promise to bless all the families of the earth was to Abraham and *his* seed.

God *called* Abraham out of Ur, whereas Ruth left Moab *of her own volition*. The Christian call blends both thoughts. First, God calls the individual, but the individual must respond wholeheartedly in order to benefit from that call.

Ruth and Orpah were both good, but Ruth did the cleaving. Her reaction shows the type of character God is looking for. He wants the Christian to love Him supremely. Reverential fear is proper but not terror.

Comment: Ruth's response was similar to Rebekah's (Gen. 24:58).

Reply: Running through the accounts of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (to some extent), and Joseph are similar threads of what God wants in His people. With Rebekah there was NO DELAY—a response that took faith.

Comment: It was not even Isaac but Eliezer, Abraham's servant, who went to get Rebekah.

Reply: The way Rebekah was found is interesting. While sitting by a well, Eliezer offered up an unusual prayer, asking that the bride for Isaac would come to that *very well* and give water to him and *all his camels VOLUNTARILY*. And what did Rebekah do? She *ran* to water the camels, and camels drink an amazing amount of water.

Comment: Even after the prayer was answered, Eliezer wondered if Rebekah was the one. We, too, are sometimes slow to recognize the answer to a prayer.

Ruth 1:17 Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried: the LORD do so to me, and more also, if aught but death part thee and me.

Comment: Ruth not only wanted to go with Naomi but made a lifetime commitment: “Where thou diest, will I die, and there will I be buried.” Her words remind us of the Christian commitment to be faithful unto death (Rev. 2:10).

Reply: Yes, the Christian makes a *lifetime* contract. Once the hand is put to the plow, one cannot look back as Lot’s wife did (Luke 9:62; Gen. 19:26). It is dangerous for a Christian to go back to the world, for very few are revived.

Naomi reminds us of Sarah and the Sarah Covenant. The Apostle Paul showed that Sarah is “the mother of us all” (Gal. 4:26). Thus a woman can picture a covenant.

Comment: Naomi was a marvelous example of a faithful individual. Her prayer life, kindness, activity, etc., made an indelible impression on Ruth.

Ruth 1:18 When she saw that she was stedfastly minded to go with her, then she left speaking unto her.

Here is another indication that Ruth represents the Little Flock. She was “stedfastly minded” to go with Naomi. The Lord loves a steadfastness of purpose in His people. Even in regard to the Adversary, we are told, “Resist the devil [steadfastly], and he will flee from you” (James 4:7).

Ruth 1:19 So they two went until they came to Bethlehem. 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 And she said unto them, Call me not Naomi, call me Mara: for the Almighty hath dealt very bitterly with me.

Ruth 1:21 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?

Naomi thought her husband and sons had died because she had displeased God. She interpreted the providence as unfavorable, but it was not unfavorable in the final analysis. The providence was a *test of faith*, and faith prompts obedience. Faith must be exercised in works—but under the gospel of faith.

Naomi was no longer a young woman upon her return to Bethlehem, so the outlook seemed gloomy to her. We are reminded of Sarah, who did not have any children until she was in her nineties. Hagar, who pictures the Law Covenant, brought forth a seed (Ishmael) before the spiritual seed of promise (Isaac).

Later we will see that Naomi likened the child born to Ruth and Boaz as her own, and so did the townspeople. The situation and birth of Obed were recognized as unusual and as being of God. Boaz was well liked too. The genealogical sequence, which was part of Messiah’s lineage, was Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David (Matt. 1:5,6). Boaz was of the lineage of Rahab, who may have been Jewish, for there is a hint to that effect in the account. At any rate, she was formerly a harlot. Both she and Mary Magdalene reformed after coming to the Lord.

Ruth 1:22 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 determination of Naomi and Ruth to go to the Promised Land while still in Moab represents the *beginning* of the Gospel Age. (Similarly, Abraham, while still in Ur, decided to go to Israel.) Naomi and Ruth arrived at the beginning of the barley harvest, which is the *end* of the Gospel Age.

Ruth 2:1 And Naomi had a kinsman of her husband's, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech; and his name was Boaz.

With Boaz picturing Jesus, his being a “mighty man of wealth” fits the antitype. The name Boaz means “strength.” Solomon’s Temple had two pillars, and one was named Boaz (1 Kings 7:21).

Verse 1 was inserted as a general statement to provide information that will be needed later on. Boaz was related to Elimelech, Naomi’s deceased husband.

Ruth 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.

“Him,” a supplied word, does not refer to Boaz at this point in time. Ruth simply wanted to glean in whatever field Divine Providence marked out for her where she would not meet opposition. There she would gather food for herself and Naomi. Naomi thought Ruth’s suggestion was a good idea.

Ruth 2:3 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.

Ruth ended up in “a part of the field” that belonged to Boaz. At first glance, her being there seemed to be by chance, but she was providentially guided. The “field” was actually a valley or a plain, so the thought is that Ruth went to Boaz’s *portion* of the plain.

The Law required that corners of the field not be reaped in order to leave them for the poor. Therefore, the poor were at liberty to enter the corners and glean there. However, Ruth “gleaned ... after the reapers”; that is, she gathered the “crumbs,” the residue, after the reapers had gone through. Whatever fell to the ground when the grain was bound in bundles was also to be left for the poor.

Ruth 2:4 And, behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said unto the reapers, The LORD be with you. And they answered him, The LORD bless thee.

What a wonderful relationship existed between Boaz, the employer, and his laborers! “The LORD be with you,” said Boaz. “The LORD bless thee,” they responded.

Ruth 2:5 Then said Boaz unto his servant that was set over the reapers, Whose damsel is this?

Ruth 2:6 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:

Boaz asked a servant who Ruth was. The servant answered, “The girl who accompanied Naomi home from Moab.”

Ruth 2:7 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 entered the field when Ruth was gleaning. (The Greek Septuagint is more accurate than the King James.) Ruth had worked without rest from morning until the time Boaz arrived.

Ruth 2:8 Then said Boaz unto Ruth, Hearst thou not, my daughter? Go not to glean in another field, neither go from hence, but abide here fast by my maidens:

Ruth 2:9 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 2:10 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?

As a foreigner, Ruth would have been more readily taken advantage of by men. “Why have I found grace in thine eyes ... seeing I am a stranger?” was her question. As stated earlier, Ruth pictures the Gentile Church. Jewish converts to Christ were at first suspicious of Gentile converts, and friction resulted. In his Epistle to the Romans, the Apostle Paul tried to straighten out the matter. Jewish Christians felt superior because of their Law background, and Gentile Christians felt that God had cast the Jews off from favor. Paul put both in their proper place, showing that the wall of partition had been broken down so that all—Jew, Gentile, male, female, bond, and free—could come to God through Christ.

Comment: Boaz was solicitous for Ruth’s food and water. Again the type fits the antitype.

Reply: Boaz gave strict orders to the men not to molest Ruth. He wanted her to stay on his property where she would be protected. He gave her certain liberties such as, “When you are thirsty, take a drink of water.” The “maidens” were “maidservants.”

Comment: Boaz favored Ruth because he knew that she had been good to Naomi and that she loved God.

Reply: Apparently, he had no romantic interest initially, but no doubt he observed that she was unusual—certainly industrious and probably attractive. He had known of her, but now he saw her for the first time.

Ruth 2:11 And Boaz answered and said unto her, It hath fully been shown 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.

Ruth 2:12 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 2:13 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.

As was proper, Ruth expressed appreciation and thankfulness for the kindness of Boaz. He was very gracious because Ruth had renounced Moabite worship and come to Israel to follow God.

The terms “the God of Abraham” and “the God of Nahor” indicate two different perspectives in worshipping the unseen God (Gen. 31:53). The descendants of Ishmael and Keturah worship Allah today. Their worship is properly of one God, but the concept is different from that of the Hebrew *El*, *Eloah*, and *Elohim*.

Comment: All of this kindness shown to Ruth occurred in *one* day.

Ruth 2:14 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.

Boaz “reached [passed to] her parched corn [grain].” Parched wheat germ is bruised so it can be chewed. The flavor lasts. “Vinegar,” the fruit of the vine, was like a sour wine that was mixed with oil. The blend made a nice dip for pita bread, and it was a staple, a food, with the bread. If we compare verses 14 and 18, we can see that Ruth retained a little of the food to take home to Naomi. The Revised Standard reads, “She ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over.” Incidentally, Numbers 6:2,3 proves that “vinegar” was of the vine.

“Corn” was the wheat germ, the kernel grain, of which there were several kinds. “Corn” was like the plural form of kernel.

Ruth 2:15 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:

Ruth 2:16 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 So she gleaned in the field until even, and beat out that she had gleaned: and it was about an ephah of barley.

Boaz felt Ruth was deserving, and he thought of the aged Naomi too. An ephah is quite a quantity—like a bushel. Ruth had to work all day (and get special favors from Boaz) in order to collect this much barley. She was industrious and humble.

God thought highly of Ruth and honored her to have a book named after her. The same is true of Joshua, Daniel, etc. The first five books, Genesis through Deuteronomy, are known as the “five books of Moses.”

Ruth 2:18 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.

Ruth 2:19 And her mother-in-law said unto her, Where hast thou gleaned today? and where wroughtest thou? blessed be he that did take knowledge of thee. And she showed her mother-in-law with whom she had wrought, and said, The man’s name with whom I wrought today is Boaz.

Ruth 2:20 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. And Naomi said unto her, The man is near of kin unto us, one of our next kinsmen.

Deuteronomy 25:5-10, which gives the duty of a kinsman under the Law, reads as follows:

“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.

“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.

“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.

“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;

“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.

“And his name shall be called in Israel, The house of him that hath his shoe loosed.”

When a brother or a near kinsman married the widow to raise up an heir in the dead brother’s name, the resulting marriage was called a Levirate marriage. If the living “brother” did not perform this duty on behalf of the widow, some shame was attached to the woman, who then had the liberty to publicly remove his shoe and spit in his face. This action would be a lasting insult to the one who refused because he would be referred to as “The house of the one that hath his shoe loosed.” Boaz was a near kinsman but not the nearest to Ruth’s dead husband.

Abraham and others had more than one wife. Under the “near kinsman” or Levirate law regarding a childless marriage relationship, the man was permitted to have more than one wife. Hagar was a concubine but was also called a “wife.” Sarah was the chief wife, but Hagar had certain privileges as a “concubine.”

Ruth 2:21 And Ruth the Moabitess said, He said unto me also, Thou shalt keep fast by my young men, until they have ended all my harvest.

Ruth 2:22 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.

Ruth 2:23 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.

Notice that Ruth gleaned through two harvests: (1) the barley harvest and (2) the wheat harvest. The antitype brings in a fine-detail perspective. Revelation 14:16 says, “And the [harvest of the] earth was reaped”; that is, the Little Flock was gathered beyond the veil into the heavenly garner. The *true* Church was reaped. Next Revelation 14:17-19 tells of the reaping of the *false* Church. Thus in chapter 14, the first harvest is favorable, and the second harvest is unfavorable.

In Matthew 13, the wheat harvest is *favorable*. “Gather the wheat into my barn” (Matt. 13:30). The good seed, the wheat, are the children of the Kingdom (Matt. 13:38). The bundling of the tares to be burned is also a harvest but an *unfavorable* one.

The double harvests in both chapters are summarized below:

	<u>Favorable</u>	<u>Unfavorable</u>
Revelation 14 -	Harvest of the earth	Harvest of the vine of the earth
Matthew 13 -	Harvest of the wheat	Harvest of the tares

Ruth first went out in the field to glean at the “beginning of barley harvest” (Ruth 1:22). Hence barley was the first harvest, and wheat was the second harvest. On the 14th of Nisan, the Passover lamb was slain. On the 16th of Nisan (still at the time of Passover), the sheaf offering of barley was waved before the Lord.

Ruth was on the scene through both the barley and the wheat harvests to do a gleaning work. After the gleaning came the threshing, or beating, to get rid of excess stalks. The remainder was then repeatedly tossed in the air for the wind to blow the chaff away. The kernel, or wheat germ, remained. All of these functions were part of the harvest.

The Book of Ruth is a complete picture of the Harvest. Jesus said the Harvest was the end of the age, that is, a *period of time*. From one standpoint, the barley harvest represents the closing of the door.

In Judges 7:9-14, a dream was an encouragement for Gideon. In that dream, a barley cake rolled down the hill and flattened a tent in the Midianite camp. Then Gideon overheard two Midianite soldiers talking. One said, “The overturning of the tent is bad news, for it means that Gideon and his band will flatten (destroy) us.” The Midianite troops numbered more than 100,000, and Gideon had only 300 men. The barley cake represented Gideon and the 300, that is, Jesus and the Church, or more specifically, the feet members.

The wheat harvest was the larger, more prolific crop; hence it represents the Great Company. There is only *one* calling in the Gospel Age, the calling to be of the Bride of Christ (Eph. 4:4). In the final analysis, only the Little Flock will comprise the Bride class, yet *millions* consecrate (and hundreds of millions *profess* to consecrate). The Apostle Paul tells us to run the race, giving all our energy, as if there is only *one* winner (1 Cor. 9:24). We are to *run to win!* We must not get careless and let things slip (Heb. 2:1).

The Great Company is the by-product of the one call. The Levites and the priests were both consecrated, but the priesthood was dedicated first (see Leviticus chapter 8). Neither the priests nor the Levites had any inheritance in the land; hence both represent spiritual classes, the priests being the Little Flock and the Levites being the Great Company.

In antitype, when the barley harvest ends, no more will be called to be of the Bride of Christ. There will be no more high calling, so there will be no more by-product either. Thus the end of the barley harvest will be the closing of the door from *God’s* standpoint. The consecrated down here (including the feet members) will not know when this occurs. *Only later*, as time and certain events transpire, will they know that the door *did close previously*.

Suppose, for example, that God determined next year to be the end of the Gospel Age calling. That time *is coming*, and it is coming *soon*. There is a *definite* time period, known to the Father, when He will stop looking for other members of the Bride. None down here will know that exact hour, day, or year. However, the Bride will not be immediately taken home at that point because time must be allowed for the last of the consecrated to either make their calling and

election sure or demonstrate they will not make the top grade. They must have a little time period in which to run the race. The wise virgins will know the door *has closed* when they enter the marriage, but they will not know the exact time when it closed *previously* (Matt. 25:10).

The door will close from two standpoints:

1. The door will close *from God's standpoint* when He no longer invites anyone to run the race for the high calling. This time will not be specifically known to those still in the flesh down here.
2. The door will close when the feet members go through that door and it closes behind them. Just as with Noah and his family on the Ark, God will close the door behind them. When Noah and family were on the Ark, they knew the door was closed, and the feet members will also know. Eventually the Great Company will know too, but they must first go to the marketplace and buy the oil. When they return and try to get in the door, they will find it closed.

The Book of Ruth breaks down the Harvest into sickling and bundling, but it also shows the threshing (in the next chapter). It is possible, then, for the Ruth class to be down here at the end of both harvests—for the sickling and the gathering—but not for the winnowing, or threshing. The third chapter of the Book of Ruth is enlightening in regard to the threshing.

Although Ruth 2:17 mentions beating, or threshing, the reference is to Ruth's *individual* need. She gleaned just for herself and Naomi, whereas chapter 3 treats the threshing of the *whole field*. The Lord feeds us, but we must feed ourselves too. We get our food in God's Word, but we have to search and study that Word as one would search for hid treasure (Prov. 2:1-5). We must be *industrious* like Ruth.

In gleaning, Ruth pictures our feeding on the daily manna. That feeding is based on our cooperation with God. If Boaz (Jesus) was not generous in feeding us, we would not get any nutriment. First, we are covered by the blood, and second, we need the Holy Spirit to understand the Word. Boaz did these things for Ruth in the type. Matthew 24:45-47 tells that at the end of the Gospel Age, on behalf of the returned invisible Lord, a servant would feed the household of faith in the beginning of the Harvest. And so the setting of Ruth is the beginning of the Harvest at the end of the Gospel Age. She pictures a Gentile class of called-out ones.

Note: Character lessons and principles in the Book of Ruth can be applied to the whole Gospel Age, but the prophetic setting starts in the time of Harvest. Chapter 3 will bring us to the end time of the time period of Harvest.

It is interesting that Revelation 14:15 regarding "the harvest of the earth" does not specify whether the harvest is barley or wheat. Because "the harvest of the earth" is sickled, we know it is grain, but what kind of grain? The harvest of "the vine of the earth" would be grapes (Rev. 14:18,19). The *entire* vine is cut and thrown into the winepress as a reject. Revelation 14 tells of two harvests: the true Church (favorable) and the false Church (unfavorable).

The wheat harvest of the Book of Ruth will not be complete until after the fall of the nominal system. (This detail is not in Revelation 14.) The Great Company are also a wheat ("virgin") class, but they are *unripe* or immature (Matt. 25:2,3). The barley harvest is earlier, being the first of the firstfruits. The prophetic setting of the Book of Ruth starts with 1874.

Ruth 3:1 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?

Verses 1-4 record the wise advice that Naomi gave to her daughter-in-law. Naomi was looking

after Ruth's welfare. According to the Law, Ruth had the right to seek a new companion who was related to her husband. Naomi knew that Boaz was a near kinsman, but probably neither she nor Ruth knew there was a closer kinsman.

Q: Was Naomi remiss in allowing her sons to marry Moabites? Were the sons unfaithful, or was it proper for them to marry Moabite women?

A: Not only could Naomi not tell her full-grown sons what to do, but there were precedents for marrying a non-Israelite. Both Joseph and Moses married other than Hebrew women. The family had gone to Moab because of a famine in Israel, and God overruled the experience to be a significant type. Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi were all outstanding in character, and some of the representations are as follows.

Naomi, a picture of the Grace Covenant, advised Ruth. Similarly, the Grace Covenant advises the Church, the Ruth class, in harmony with Scripture.

Elimelech had two sons, Mahlon and Chilion. They, with Naomi, went to the foreign land of Moab. The two sons picture the two kingdoms of Israel (the ten and the two tribes). Both kingdoms were taken into captivity several times *before* the AD era. They also went into captivity *in* the AD era, that is, in AD 70. At the time of Jesus' ministry, the two tribes had been regathered. Therefore, when Jesus was sent to "the lost sheep of the house of Israel," his mission included both kingdoms (Matt. 10:6). The Diaspora of Jews into Gentile lands began in AD 70, and this dispersion harmonizes with Moab's being a picture of a *foreign* land. The Diaspora is also pictured in the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

Ruth represents Gentile converts. After AD 70, very few Jews entered the Church, and the Church became overwhelmingly Gentile. This development corresponds with Ruth's coming into harmony with the God of Israel.

The name Elimelech means "God is King." God dealt only with Israel (primarily the two tribes) until AD 36. Elimelech's death pictures the end of exclusive favor to natural Israel. From that point on, the antitype takes place in the Gospel Age.

The Book of Ruth is a beautiful story of the Gospel Age from the standpoint of principle and the things that endear the Ruth class to Boaz (Jesus), but when Ruth and Naomi came back to Israel, it was the time of harvest. Hence, at that point, the picture shifts down to the end of the Gospel Age. Ruth 2:23 says that Ruth gleaned through both the barley and the wheat harvests. In gathering the wheat, she threshed only for her *private* use. Regarding the end of the age, the *collective* standpoint is also significant. Ruth gleaned to the end of the barley and wheat harvests and dwelled with her mother-in-law.

Verse 1 shows that Naomi was solicitous for the welfare of Ruth, but Ruth's welfare would also bring satisfaction to Naomi. This is also true of the Sarah Covenant, which is looking for children. When the 144,000 are all gathered, "Sarah" will be satisfied in having fulfilled her mission as a covenant.

Ruth 3:2 **And now is not Boaz of our kindred, with whose maidens thou wast? Behold, he winnoweth barley tonight in the threshingfloor.**

The "maidens" picture the Great Company. Naomi said that Boaz (Jesus) "winnoweth [threshes] *barley* tonight in the threshingfloor." The barley was about to be threshed when, as we shall see, Ruth went to meet Boaz.

As previously discussed, Matthew 13:24-30 speaks of two harvests: the gathering of wheat and the gathering of tares. Revelation 14:15,16,18-20 also mentions two harvests: a grain harvest and a grape harvest (grapes are to be thrown into the winepress of the wrath of God). Isaiah 21:10 adds a new feature: *threshing*. (For a fuller explanation, see Appendix 8, “A Prophecy Nearing Fulfillment,” on pages 643-646 in *The Keys of Revelation*.) The Isaiah 21:10 prophecy reads: “O my threshing, and the corn [bruised sons] of my floor: that which I have heard of the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, have I declared unto you.” The feet members will be threshed, and Jesus, the Chief Reaper, is expressing sympathy for them. The special crushing of the Dark Ages will occur again. We should be conscious of the *lack* of such experiences in the Harvest period, for much of the Gospel Age has entailed *violent persecution*. In nature, the threshing occurs after the gathering of the wheat; that is, the sickling (or gathering) is followed by the threshing and winnowing. The word “bruised” means “crushed” (put to death). The millstone will grind again before being cast into the sea (Rev. 18:21). As the grain, or wheat germ, is separated from the stalk by beating, so the new creature will be separated from the old man by threshing (persecution). The old man must perish to release the new man.

The literal Hebrew for Jesus’ sentiments in Isaiah 21:10 is as follows: “O my downtrodden one and the son [collective noun, hence *plural* in meaning] of my floor....” As a single ear of corn contains many kernels, or seeds, so “son” is plural in meaning.

Ruth 3:3 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.

Naomi’s instructions were, “Wash and anoint yourself, and put on your raiment. Go down to the threshing floor, but do not reveal yourself to Boaz until he has finished eating and drinking.” “Wash and anoint yourself, and put on your raiment” reminds us of several things:

1. Jesus’ words: “Blessed is he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame” (Rev. 16:15).
2. The preparation period for Esther (Esther 2:12,15).
3. The wise virgins’ having the oil (Matt. 25:4).
4. And especially the Laodicean Church: “I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire ... and white raiment, ... and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve” (Rev. 3:18). Consecration costs us something. Those in the Laodicean period of the Church need development, purifying, and crystallization of character if they are to please the Master, for the Laodicean spirit pervades not only the nominal Church but also the true Church. The Great Company at the end of the age are tribulation saints, who need to wash their tainted robes in the blood of the Lamb. The consecrated must voluntarily develop *now*, or there will be a *forced* wilderness experience later, as shown by the scapegoat picture (Lev. 16:9,10,21,22). Spots and creases are to be washed out as soon as possible. Being lethargic, the Great Company allow their garments to get soiled and wrinkled. Later *stronger* soap will be needed—and under *dire* circumstances.

Ruth was to act secretly until Boaz finished “eating and drinking.” When Jesus came in 1874, he served his people through a servant, supplying meat and drink. Jesus makes sure the food is served. When all the food that is due has been served, it will be the end of the sickling harvest, in contradistinction to the subsequent threshing. When the door to the high calling closes from *God’s* standpoint—when *He* sees that the last one has consecrated who will make the 144,000—He will discontinue the call. Otherwise, the call would be a false hope. No man down here will know when the door closes, but from that point on, none will be called whether they would be

Little Flock or Great Company. The invitation will cease.

Down here the closing of the door will first be seen by the Great Company. The wise virgins will go through an open door, and Jesus will go with them. The day and hour of the closing of the door will not be known until the Great Company come back from the marketplace with the oil, knock on the door, and find it closed; that is, they will be mentally alerted to the fact they missed the marriage. Therefore, we do not know when the barley harvest will end. Ruth stayed until both harvests had ended.

The sickling has yet another standpoint. The Church class, the called-out ones, initially separate from a former condition, for *both* the Little Flock and the Great Company obey the call. (In the type, both Abraham and Lot left Ur of the Chaldees.) When *God* closes the door, the works of *both* the Little Flock and the Great Company will be terminated, but the winnowing will still lie ahead. Now that we are beyond the year 2000, more than 120 years have elapsed since 1878. Therefore, we are *near* the end of the age, and the closing of the door will be exact, like the tick of a clock. The year can be known in advance but not the day or the hour.

What about the “eating and drinking”? Both the wise and the foolish virgins had oil earlier. They all went forth to meet the Bridegroom in darkness. Their lamps were lit, but then they fell asleep. When they awoke, the foolish did not have a sufficiency of oil. Stated another way, when the Master finishes eating and drinking with his disciples, the foolish virgins will not have the extra supply of oil tucked away. Ruth illustrated this principle. When she got a supply of food from Boaz, she thought of Naomi and kept some aside for her.

Because the wise virgins had an extra supply of oil in their vessels, they could fill their lamps when they trimmed the wicks. (In the type, at 3 p.m. the high priest removed the dross and replenished the oil supply in the lamp from a separate container.) Having the extra oil, the wise were ready to meet the Bridegroom. When the foolish asked for oil, there was not time to secure it. The wise told the foolish to go to the marketplace and buy the oil for themselves (Matt. 25:8,9). The occurrence of these events will show the lateness of the hour.

Many are so content with the Harvest message that they do not try to understand other pictures. They say, “If those types were important, the seventh messenger would have written on them.” Hence they do not progress. “To the work, to the work!” is their cry.

The “awakening” in the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Virgins is still future. When the virgins awake, there will be a separation between the wise and the foolish. The wise will enter in to the marriage, and the foolish will go back to the marketplace. In two *Reprint* articles, the Pastor said, regarding this parable, that in the future there will be a separation in the true Church between the Little Flock and the Great Company, between the wise and the foolish virgins. Pictures such as this one are important, for they alert us to the needs of the future. We must let ridicule roll off our backs, for there is no time to feel resentment.

Ruth 3:4 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.

When will Boaz (Jesus) “lie down”? This term suggests Jesus’ being asleep in the boat on the Sea of Galilee. Both storms on that body of water picture the end of the age. “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” asked the apostles (Mark 4:38). Jesus said on the Cross, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” These incidents indicate that the feet members *will (and must) also experience* such feelings. The heel members will have *checkered, up-and-down* emotions and experiences very similar to those in Jesus’ last hours. Having these feelings does not mean

one is not a member of the Little Flock, for even Jesus had vacillating emotions. We will feel abandoned and discouraged.

Ruth had a right under the Law to uncover the feet of Boaz and to lie down there. By her actions, not only was she reminding him that he was a near kinsman, but she was more or less proposing. Boaz had mentioned earlier that she had a spotless reputation.

Boaz was an old man. The contrast of his age with Ruth's age was noticeable. Jesus is "old" too, especially when compared with the Little Flock. In going to Boaz, Ruth put her reputation on the block. If she was seen by others, it would look as if mischief was taking place. (Jesus' birth circumstances were impugned too.) Boaz and Ruth were both known as virtuous (Ruth 3:11). We have no indication that Boaz was married. His concern lest Ruth be molested proves he had a high standard and a virtuous character.

"He will tell thee what thou shalt do." Naomi added that Boaz (a type of Jesus) would tell Ruth what to do, just as we are being told now by God's Word what to do at the end of the age. Jesus informs his Church; instruction will be given. Naomi was saying that instruction would come in due time.

Comment: Ruth kept taking the initiative under the advice of Naomi (the Sarah Covenant). Her actions indicate that the feet members will take a stand.

Ruth 3:5 And she said unto her, All that thou sayest unto me I will do.

Ruth said she would follow all of Naomi's advice. In antitype, the feet members will obey the Sarah Covenant—especially regarding the end of the age.

All down the age, God's people were responsible for the dispensational truth that was due in their respective time. Jesus gave dispensational advice in Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamos, etc. In fact, *dispensational* advice is peculiarly Jesus' responsibility. As the Revelator, he told John what to write, and the apostle merely recorded what he saw and heard.

Dispensational truth is due today. Although dispensational truth was given earlier in the Harvest, the end of the age will be a new experience. How startling that persecution has been lacking thus far in the Harvest!

Ruth 3:6 And she went down unto the floor, and did according to all that her mother-in-law bade her.

Ruth 3:7 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.

"At the end of the heap of corn [barley]" would be at the *very end* of the age in antitype. The New International Version has "at the far end of the grain pile."

Ruth 3:8 And it came to pass at midnight, that the man was afraid, and turned himself: and, behold, a woman lay at his feet.

At midnight Boaz was afraid. Sensing something was wrong, he turned (bent forward) and saw a woman lying at his feet.

Q: In what way did Ruth lie at the feet of Boaz? Was she at the side of his feet?

A: Yes. When Boaz turned, he discovered her. Ruth was so close to him that when he moved, he felt something.

The NIV reads, “In the middle of the night [1] something startled the man, and [2] he turned and discovered a woman lying at his feet.”

At midnight, this incident occurred, corresponding with the midnight cry “Behold the bridegroom.” This “midnight,” when the barley was winnowed and threshed, will be the night wherein no man can work, the hour of power of the beast, the twelfth hour of the Parable of the Penny, and the antitype of the midnight when the destroying angel passed over the Israelite firstborn who were under the blood (John 9:4).

Ruth 3:9 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 told her purpose: “I am Ruth, your handmaid.” (She was saying in effect, “I am Ruth. The rest of the matter is up to you.”) “Spread your skirt over your handmaid, for you are a near kinsman.” The implication is that Naomi and Ruth did not know there was a nearer kinsman than Boaz.

Ruth 3:10 And he said, Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter: for thou hast shown more kindness in the latter end than at the beginning, inasmuch as thou followedst not young men, whether poor or rich.

Boaz said, “Blessed be thou of the LORD, my daughter.” Boaz was old and Ruth was young, so he called her “my daughter.” As Christians, we are daughters of Jehovah, not Jesus, so the lesson here is one of age difference.

Consider the reference to “young men.” If Ruth waited too long, she would not be able to have children, and Hebrew women desired to have a son in the hope that he would be the Messiah. However, Boaz had noticed that as a *principled* woman, Ruth conducted herself very carefully and was not trying to attract young men, either rich or poor.

In matters of judgment, the Law commanded not to respect the person of the poor or the rich (Lev. 19:15; Deut. 1:17). Before the bar of justice, both king and pauper were to be treated equally. Following that principle, we are to judge righteous judgment and not let emotion affect our judgment. Judgment is to be impartial, and *now* is the time for Christians to learn the principles of judging. The 144,000 will be rich in faith and poor (humble) in spirit.

Q: In antitype, would the “young men” be human leaders that the Ruth class would not reverence or worship inordinately?

A: Yes, that would be true in church matters and in one’s spiritual life.

Comment: The Ruth class put their faith in the Lord, not in human leaders. They follow human leaders only in proportion as those leaders follow the Lord.

Ruth 3:11 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.

Ruth 3:12 And now it is true that I am thy near kinsman: howbeit there is a kinsman nearer than I.

Ruth 3:13 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.

Boaz promised to fulfill the part of a kinsman as much as possible, but first, he would have to seek out the nearer kinsman, as required under the Law (Deut. 25:5-10).

There is an antitype for the nearer kinsman. Both here and in the Law, the kinsman without a shoe was Adam. Jesus had to become a perfect man in order to be a substitute for Adam, the sinner. Being without one shoe indicates he lost his standing with God. In addition to losing the shoe of the nearest kinsman who would not redeem her, the woman also spit in the man's face. And that is what happened to Adam, who forfeited his right to be a proper father—God spit in his face. Boaz pictures Jesus, the Second Adam.

Ruth 3:14 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.

It was still dark enough just before dawn that no one could see Ruth leaving. Verse 14 proves it was not a bright moonlit night. Verse 9 is another proof of the darkness, for Boaz could not see who was lying at his feet and had to ask, "Who art thou?"

The paragraph mark at verse 14 indicates that a new and separate picture is beginning. One clue is the mention in verse 15 of "six measures of barley," which represent the six Volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*. Ruth, who pictures the feet members, lay at Boaz's feet until morning. The picture begins in 1874 and covers the Harvest period, the end of the age. This particular scene took place at the threshing floor, and in the antitype, no threshing has yet occurred. Morning precedes the sunrise, and a peculiar phenomenon of nature is that it is darker just before the dawn.

Boaz knew that Ruth was a virtuous woman, and he wanted to protect her reputation. By lying at his feet, Ruth put Boaz on the spot (but properly so according to the Law). The question was, Would he or would he not perform the duty of a kinsman?

If anyone saw Ruth leaving, it would be thought that mischief had occurred. There is a parallel between Jesus and Boaz along this line, for Jesus was not the son of Joseph, yet Mary had a child. At the close of Jesus' ministry, the Pharisees accused him of being illegitimate. They said, "We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God" (John 8:41).

Ruth 3:15 Also he said, Bring the veil 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.

Ruth's "veil" pictures the robe of Christ's righteousness. The six measures of barley (the six Volumes) were given to the *consecrated* in the Harvest period. Barley is the first grain harvest in the Middle East; wheat is next. The six water pots at the wedding in Cana are a confirmation of the symbolism of the six measures of barley. There Jesus performed his first miracle by turning water into wine—just as refreshing, clear, pure truth miraculously became exhilarating wine through the six Volumes early in the Harvest period. Incidentally, grapes can have either an unfavorable connotation, as in the grapes of wrath, or a favorable connotation, as here.

Ruth 3:16 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.

Naomi asked Ruth, “How did you fare, my daughter?” Ruth related everything that had happened.

Ruth 3:17 And she said, These six measures of barley gave he me; for he said to me, Go not empty unto thy mother-in-law.

The six measures of barley would have been very heavy.

Ruth 3:18 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 knew Boaz well. She knew he would not rest until the matter was settled regarding the nearer kinsman. In the antitype, the Lord does not rest on our behalf. He is not slack concerning his promises and providences. Chapter 4 tells what Boaz had to do to get Ruth as his bride under the Levirate law.

The Book of Ruth covers the Harvest up to the threshing. In Ruth 3:14, the account backs off and starts again at the beginning of the Harvest. Just as Boaz gave Ruth the barley one measure after the other, so the Volumes were issued consecutively (Ruth 3:15). The statement “she lay at his feet until the morning” ends one picture and starts another. The “morning” can be (1) the resurrection morning still future or (2) the Millennial morning, which began in 1874.

We “rest” in the sense of waiting to see whether we will be acceptable to Boaz. In addition, there remaineth a rest beyond the veil (Heb. 4:9-11). The Great Company will also get a spiritual reward, for God appreciates those who have dedicated their lives to Him. “Be thou faithful unto *death*” is the instruction (Rev. 2:10). If one stops his consecration midcourse, he does not get life. *Both* the Little Flock and the Great Company must be faithful unto death, but the Little Flock are more than overcomers (Rom. 8:37).

Ruth 4:1 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.

Ruth 4:2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city, and said, Sit ye down here. And they sat down.

Ruth 4:3 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:

Ruth 4:4 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 Then said Boaz, What day thou buyest the field of the hand of Naomi, thou must buy it also of Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to raise up the name of the dead upon his inheritance.

Boaz was *direct* and methodical. He knew exactly what to do. He went to the gate where all judgment was given and where all of the people went through. No doubt he had gotten up early and gone to the gate quickly so that he would be sure to catch the kinsman. Seeing the kinsman, Boaz called out, “Ho, there!” When the kinsman turned, Boaz said, “Come over here

and sit down.” Then Boaz ordered ten elders to sit down. He truly would not rest until the matter was settled. We are reminded of Jesus’ ability to perform, of his workmanship (pictured by cassia).

Jesus’ preexistent knowledge helped him to be faithful down here, but he also learned knowledge while on earth—experimental knowledge. “Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered” (Heb. 5:8). Jesus was obedient before the First Advent, but he had to learn obedience under *duress* and *persecution*. He was put to the test.

The compliance of the ten elders shows that Boaz was very respected and influential. And he was aged. His marriage to Ruth at such an old age corresponds to Jesus, who said, “Before Abraham was, I am” (John 8:58). The ten were a panel of judges. The number 10 shows completeness along earthly lines, such as the ten horns, the ten toes, and the ten virgins (who are still on earth in the present life). The word “advertise” in verse 4 means “inform”: “I thought to advertise thee,” that is, Boaz informed the ten elders. Having the witnesses made the agreement a public contract.

Boaz did not want the kinsman to hem and haw. In other words, “Make a decision!” How Boaz’s heart must have sunk when the kinsman said he would redeem the land! Then Boaz reminded the kinsman that Ruth went with the land. The kinsman did not want Ruth, for that would mar his own inheritance, and he wanted to raise up a child in his own name.

Boaz was such a just man that he presented the matter in a business-like fashion, even though he might lose Ruth. Jesus is “the just [One]” (James 5:6; 1 Pet. 3:18). Another similarity between the two is that Jesus bought the field to get the treasure, and so did Boaz (Matt. 13:44).

Q: Does the kinsman still represent Adam?

A: That would seem to be the case because Adam had the right of redemption as the father of the human race.

Comment: The antitype would fit, for Adam and his posterity are generally interested in earthly things.

Reply: Adam and Noah were both told to multiply and fill the earth. Noah is a type of the Second Adam. Adam was the father of the human race up to the Flood, but after the Flood, Noah is the one from whom all life came. Jesus carries Adam’s name, and Boaz would have to carry the dead son’s name. Adam could not redeem, and neither did the near kinsman.

The oldest son got a *double* portion, and the other sons each got *one* portion. (If there was no male son, the oldest daughter got the double portion.) The near kinsman probably already had some sons, and with a Levirate marriage, the *new* son would get the double portion.

Ruth 4:6 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 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.

There is a difference between this account in Ruth and the Levirate custom in the twenty-fifth chapter of Deuteronomy. In Deuteronomy, the woman spit in the face of the man who refused to perform the act of a Levirate marriage. “Changing” in verse 7 refers to the near kinsman’s

changing his mind. First, he said he would redeem the land, but when it was made clear he had to take Ruth too, he reneged.

The NIV is good for verse 7, although it does not follow the Hebrew: “(Now in earlier times in Israel, for the redemption and transfer of property to become final, one party took off his sandal and gave it to the other. This was the method of legalizing transactions in Israel.)” In Western nations, a handshake sealed a contract. Back there it was the loosing of a shoe.

The spiritual meaning is as follows. The nearest of kin refused to or could not perform the act Boaz requested, so Boaz fulfilled the duty of a near kinsman. In antitype, the nearest kinsman was Adam, who failed the test of obedience. Boaz represents the Second Adam, Jesus, who fulfilled the role. The “shoe” being loosed because the nearest kinsman failed to perform indicates the loss of a former standing. Similarly, we use our shoes when we stand. In other words, Adam fell. “Resurrection” (the Greek *anastasis*) means a standing up.

Ruth 4:8 Therefore the kinsman said unto Boaz, Buy it for thee. So he drew off his shoe.

The nearest kinsman gave Boaz his shoe as if to say, “You, Boaz, stand in my stead regarding the contract.”

Ruth 4:9 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.

Naomi’s sons had died without having children.

Ruth 4:10 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.

Here we find that Ruth had been Mahlon’s wife. In antitype, the purchase, or contract, was made down here. Jesus was made flesh. He was “the Son of [the] man [Adam]” (Matt. 12:8). Adam was created perfect, and Jesus was his Son, also being perfect.

Ruth 4:11 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:

The contract was performed in the gate of the city. Judges sat in the city gate, and legal transactions and judgments took place there.

Why were Rachel and Leah, Jacob’s wives, mentioned? Out of these two came the 12 tribes of Israel. Rachel had two sons of her own (Joseph and Benjamin) and two more sons through her concubine. Leah had six sons of her own and two additional sons through her concubine plus a daughter, Dinah.

Ruth 1:1,2 mentions Bethlehem-judah, that is, the Bethlehem *in* Judah. Bethlehem was also in Ephratah. Rachel gave birth to Benjamin in the outskirts of Bethlehem (Gen. 35:16-18). There was another Bethlehem in the ten-tribe kingdom.

Ruth 4:12 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.

Through subterfuge, Pharez was born to Tamar of Judah, her father-in-law, after her husband Er died, leaving her childless, and after Judah failed to provide another husband for her. The sin of Onan was that he spilled his seed on the ground instead of performing his Levirate duty. Onan wanted the pleasure of the act but refused to “give seed to his brother[’s name].” Then the young brother, Shelah, was to be given to Tamar when he came of age, but Judah forgot and/or neglected to do this (Gen. 38:1-11).

Tamar was of the lineage of Messiah, which was traced through Pharez (Matt. 1:3). In his Gospel, Matthew listed in Messiah’s lineage those of questionable background who were approved of God: Rahab, Tamar, and Ruth (Matt. 1:5). Matthew and Luke recorded different genealogies: one maternal and one through in-laws.

Ruth was called a “young woman” here. Probably she was in her late twenties.

Ruth 4:13 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.

Boaz and Ruth bore a son whose name was Obed (see verse 21).

Ruth 4:14 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.

Ruth 4:15 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 borne him.

As a result of the birth of a son to Boaz and Ruth, the women of the town were very happy. After the Millennial Age, when other planets are populated, Sarah will have more children than Hagar (Gal. 4:27). Those developed under the Sarah Covenant (the Little Flock) will give life to trillions of people. Obed’s name became famous in Messiah’s lineage, the genealogy being Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David (Matt. 1:5,6; Luke 3:31,32).

What a commendation for Ruth! She was better to Naomi “than *seven* sons.” In 1 Samuel 1:8, Elkanah used the same expression but from a different perspective when he said to his wife Hannah, who lamented her barrenness, “Am I not better to thee than *ten* sons?” Hannah was subsequently blessed with not only Samuel but also other children.

Ruth 4:16 And Naomi took the child, and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse unto it.

Naomi became the nurse for Obed, just as the Church is nursed by the Sarah Covenant. Sarah was barren and Hagar bore first because the natural preceded the spiritual. Hagar pictures the Old Law Covenant, and Ishmael pictures the natural seed. Sarah represents the Grace Covenant, and Isaac represents the spiritual seed. Keturah, a picture of the New Covenant, came on the scene after Sarah died, that is, after the Grace Covenant ended.

Ruth 4:17 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 town women, Naomi’s neighbors, gave the son of Boaz and Ruth the name Obed, which means “serving,” “servant,” and “*worshipped*.”

Ruth 4:18 Now these are the generations of Pharez: Pharez begat Hezron,

Ruth 4:19 And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab,

Ruth 4:20 And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon,

Ruth 4:21 And Salmon begat Boaz, and Boaz begat Obed,

Ruth 4:22 And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.

Verses 18-22 prove that Boaz was in the lineage of Christ. The Gospels of Matthew and Luke show that Messiah was of David's lineage in two ways. Boaz and David both picture Jesus.

Ruth is special as a prophetic book. It shows the Harvest as a gathering in the field, first the barley and then the wheat. (Other pictures show the Harvest as a gathering into the barn.) The barley was threshed, but nothing is said about the threshing of the wheat. In the Book of Ruth, the fact the earlier barley harvest was superior to the wheat harvest shows that the Little Flock will go off the earthly scene before the Great Company. The threshing and the winnowing process was as follows:

1. The grain was sickled with the stalk.
2. The stalks were bundled.
3. The stalks were threshed to loosen the seed.
4. The seed was winnowed to get rid of the chaff. (The seed was thrown up into the air, and the wind blew the chaff away.)

Hence the order was (1) harvest gathering, (2) threshing, and (3) winnowing.

Since we are all called in the one hope, the Great Company are a by-product (Eph. 4:4). Both harvests (barley and wheat) end practically simultaneously because once the door to the high calling closes, no more will be called. The Book of Ruth brings out this fact.

Some Harvest pictures show the good (Little Flock) and the bad (tares), but the Book of Ruth shows the good (Little Flock) and the less good (Great Company). The barley harvest pertains to the Little Flock, and the wheat harvest pertains to the Great Company. No tares are shown. The Book of Ruth adds to and clarifies the subject of the Harvest.