

WOMEN IN THE
BIBLE
RUTH &
ESTHER

2 TIMOTHY 3:16

16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness.

17 that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped

Ruth & Esther

Two strong women
who changed the
course of history
by making
difficult decisions
in difficult times.



Ruth & Esther

A destitute Gentile widow who supported her Jewish mother-in-law and was a convert to Judaism. Through faith and the hand of God, she helps redeem her mother-in-law's inheritance and becomes the great-grandmother of a king.



Ruth & Esther

A Jewish orphan raised
in exile, she hid her
Jewish beliefs, slept
with a pagan king and
became his queen.
Through faith and
the hand of God,
she saved the
Jewish people
from genocide.



Ruth & Esther

Despite their
contrasting
backgrounds, both
were women of
great faith who
became
redeemers for
their people.



2020
SESSION
2

WOMEN IN THE
BIBLE
RUTH &
ESTHER

*the ultimate
love story*

The book of

Ruth PART 2

the ultimate
love story

The background is a dark blue field filled with a repeating geometric pattern. It consists of interlocking triangles that form a larger triangular grid. Within the negative space of this grid, there are stylized menorahs (candelabras) in a golden-yellow color. The text is centered over this pattern.

Introduction

to

HEBREW POETRY

Introduction to Hebrew Poetry

- Approximately 1/3 of the Old Testament is poetic, and this includes the book of Ruth.
- Hebrew poetry is very different from English poetry:
 - English poetry, developed from Greek and Latin poetry, is primarily sound-based. Things rhyme.
 - Hebrew poetry is basically thought-based. Its beauty is found in balanced lines of thought.
 - Imagery expresses truth, feelings or experiences.
 - It is highly structured through use of parallel thoughts, word play and sound play.
- Understanding the basics may help to better appreciate both Old and New Testament writing.

Four Poetic Structures

1. Synonymous: the same thought is expressed in different words.

Listen to the Lord's message,
you leaders of Sodom!
Pay attention to our God's
rebuke, people of Gomorrah!

Amos 8:10

2. Antithetic: lines give opposite thoughts (eg., positive/negative)

A gentle response turns
away anger,
but a harsh word stirs up
wrath.

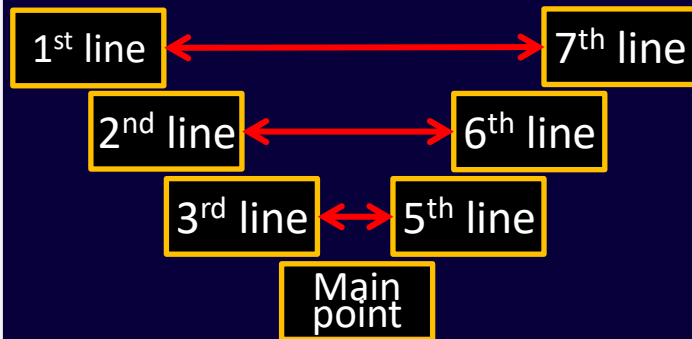
Proverbs 15:1

3. Synthetic: the same thought is developed over 2 or more lines

The law of the Lord is perfect and
preserves one's life.
The rules set down by the Lord are
reliable and impart wisdom.
The Lord's precepts are fair and
make one joyful.
The Lord's commands are pure and
give insight for life.

Psalms 19:7-8

4. Chiasmic: message is expressed in a descending and ascending order. Main point is centred.



Open to Interpretation?

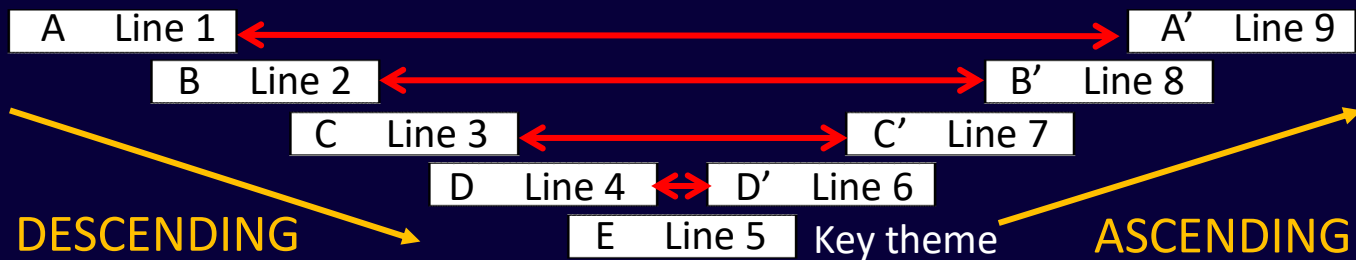
- Many people interpret the Bible differently. How can we be sure we have the right interpretation? Why bother if it can be interpreted in so many different ways?



Don't bother Ray.
He's looking for a Bible
verse to back up one of
his preconceived
notions.

The Chiasm

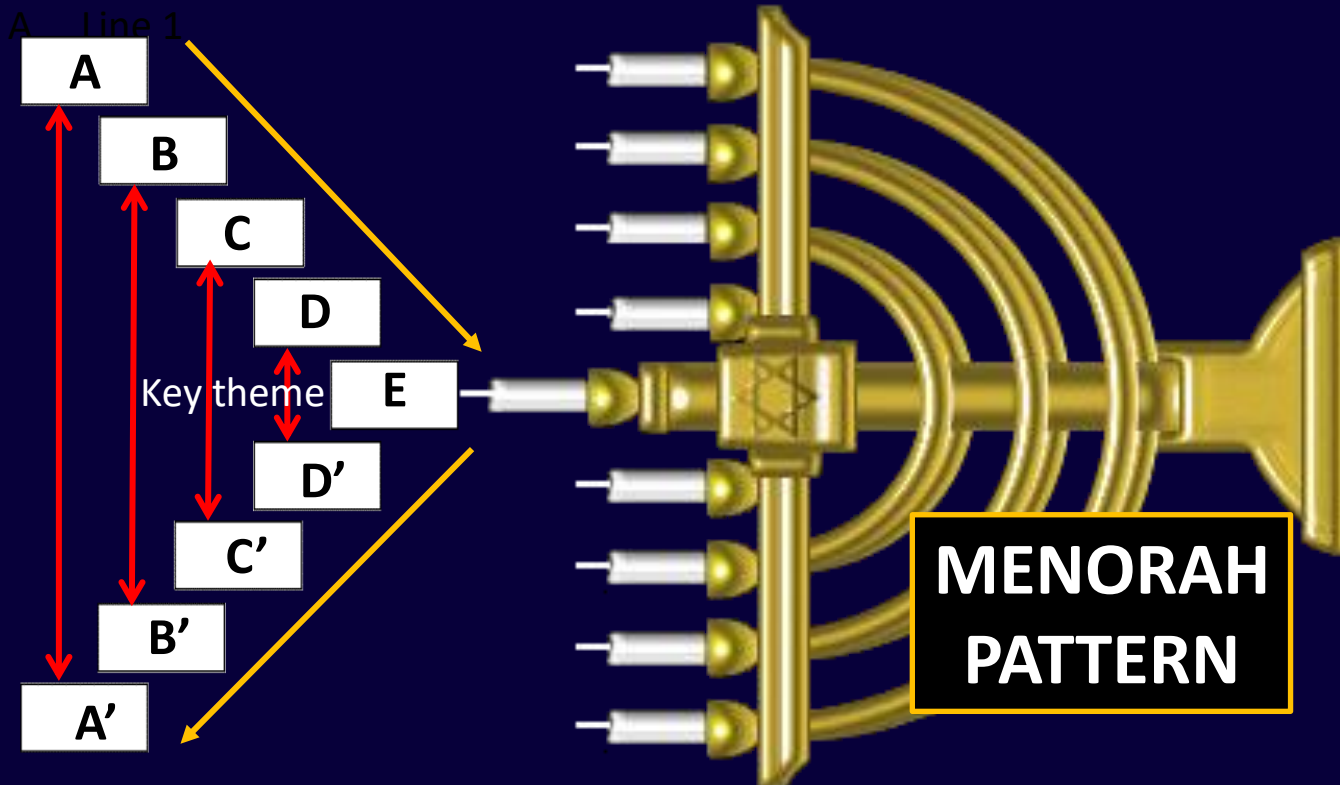
- Purpose: provides structure for interpretation
- The pattern can be shown in two ways:



**MENORAH
PATTERN**

The Chiasm

- Purpose: provides structure for interpretation
- The pattern can be shown in two ways:



Literary structure of the book of Ruth

A

The genealogy of Elimelech (1:1-5): "Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion; Ephrathites from Bethlehem of Judah" travel to Moab.

B

Naomi loses her heirs (1:6-22): "Go back, my daughters! Have I other sons in my womb who may become your husbands?"

C

Ruth negotiates (2:1-23): "I am your servant Ruth. Spread the corner of your cloak over me, for you are my next of kin."

D

- A. Genealogy
- B. Naomi's heirs
- C. Ruth and Boaz
- D. Ruth accepted in

Boaz accepts kinship responsibility for Ruth (3:1-18).
So be assured, daughter, I will do for you whatever you say.

C'

Boaz negotiates (4:1-10): "I take Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, as my wife, to raise up a family for her late husband on his estate."

B'

Naomi gains an heir (4:11-17): "And the neighbor women gave him his name, at the news that a grandson had been born to Naomi."

A'

The genealogy of David (4:18-22): "These are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron...."

Each half also forms a chiasmus

A

Elimelech's family (1:1-5): "Elimelech, his wife Naomi, and his sons Mahlon and Chilion; Ephrathites from Bethlehem of Judah" travel to Moab.

B

A. Bereavement/
remarriage

Naomi and Ruth (1:6-22): "Wherever you go I will go, your people shall be my people, and your God."

B'

B. Ruth's loyalty

Ruth meets Boaz (2:1-23): "I have heard what you have done for Naomi."

A'

Elimelech's lineage assured (3:1-18): "So be assured, daughter, I will do for you whatever you say."

C

Elimelech's lineage assured (3:1-18): "I am your servant Ruth. Spread the corner of your cloak over me, for you are my next of kin."

D

C. Continuity of
lineage

Naomi and Ruth (4:1-10): "I take Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, as my wife, to raise up a family for her late husband on his estate."

D'

D. Marriage of
Boaz

Marriage of Ruth and Boaz (4:11-17): "When they came together as man and wife, the LORD enabled her to conceive and she bore a son."

C'

The genealogy of David (4:18-22): "These are the descendants of Perez: Perez was the father of Hezron...."

Negotiation at the City Gate (Ruth 4:1-12)

A

The Elders of Bethlehem (4:1-2):

"Then Boaz picked out ten of the elders of the city and asked them to sit nearby."

B

Words of Boaz (4:3-4a)

C

Words of the Near Relative (4:4b)

D

- A. The Elders
- B. Boaz
- C. Near relative
- D. Boaz

Boaz continues (4:5): "Once you acquire the field from Naomi, you must take also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the late heir, and raise up a family for the departed on his estate."

C'

Words of the Near Relative (4:6-8)

B'

Words of Boaz (4:9-10)

A'

The Elders of Bethlehem (4:11):

"All those at the gate, including the elders, said "

The Engagement (Ruth 2:23b-3:18)

A

Conversation of Naomi and Ruth

(2:23b-3:6)

B

Acts of Boaz

(3:7-9a)

C

Acts of Ruth

(3:9b)

D

Promise of Boaz

(3:10-13)

C'

Acts of Ruth

(3:14)

B'

Acts of Boaz

(3:15)

A'

Conversation of Naomi and Ruth

(3:16-18)

Ruth meets Boaz (Ruth 2:1-23a)

A

Conversation of Naomi and Ruth (2:1-2)

B

Gleaning (2:3)

C

Conversation of Boaz and others (2:4-7)

D

Boaz's kindness towards Ruth (2:8-9)

E

Ruth responds (2:10)

F

Prayer of Boaz (2:11-12)

E'

Ruth responds (2:13)

D'

Boaz's favour towards Ruth (2:14)

C'

Conversation of Boaz and others (2:15-16)

B'

Gleaning (2:17-18)

A'

Conversation of Naomi and Ruth (2:19-23a)

The Return from Moab (Ruth 1:6-22)

A

Persuasion of Naomi (1:6-9)

B

Opposition of daughters-in-law (1:10)

C

Perceptions of the LORD (1:11-12):
"the LORD has extended his hand against me."

D

Persistence of Ruth (1:14):
"Ruth stayed with her."

A'

Persuasion of Naomi (1:15)

B'

Opposition of Ruth (1:16-18)

C'

Perceptions of the LORD (1:18-21):
"the LORD has pronounced against me."

D'

Persistence of Ruth (1:22):
"Naomi returned with daughter-in-law Ruth."

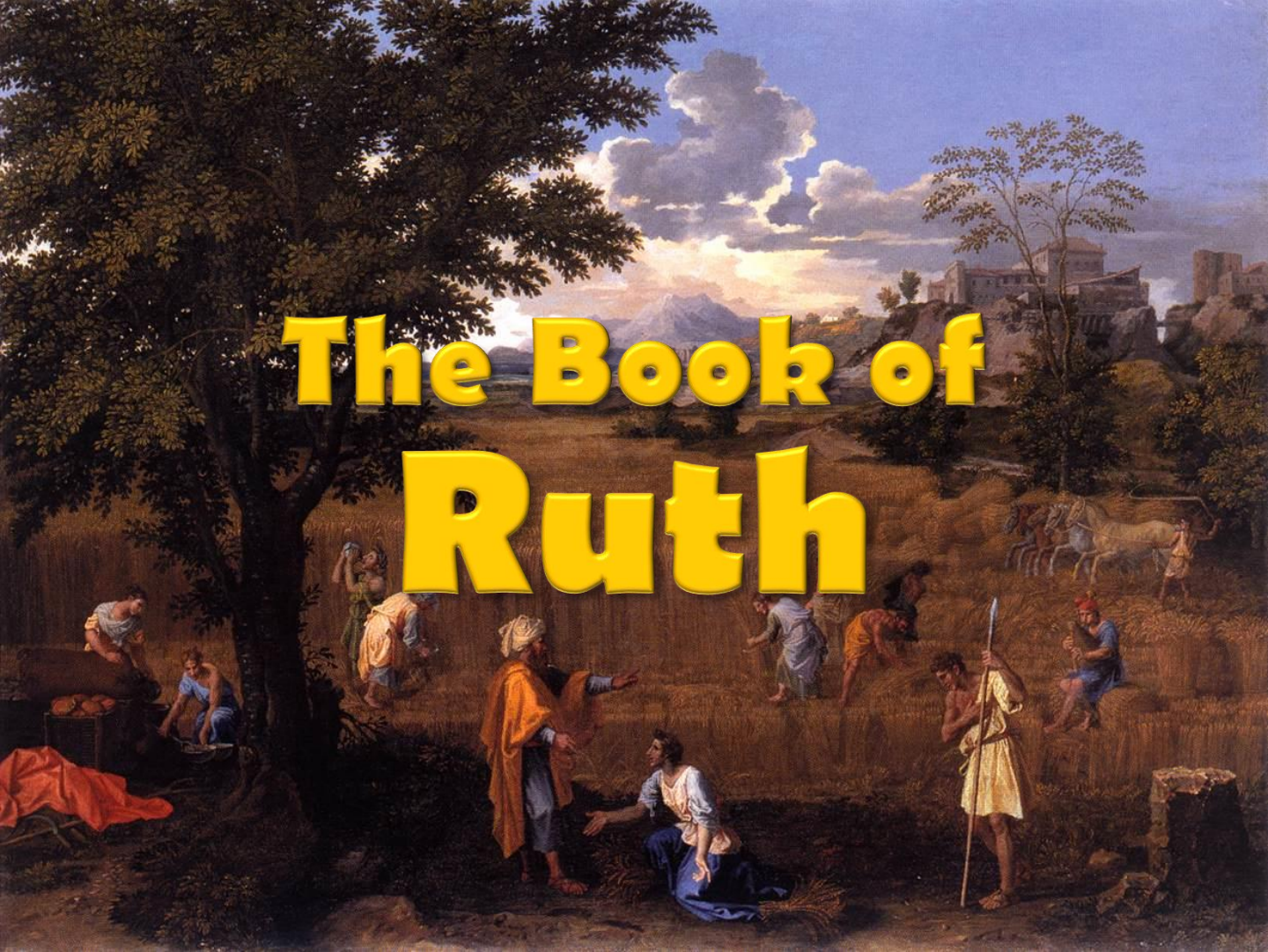


HEBREW POETRY

Literary structure

- A Naomi is too old to conceive [Ch. 1]
- B The possible Redeemer is introduced [2:1]
- C Ruth and Naomi's plan begins [2:2]
- D Ruth and Boaz's field [2:3]
- E Boaz comes from Bethlehem [2:4]
- F Boaz asks, "Who is that young woman?" [2: 5- 7]
- G Boaz gives Ruth food; Ruth gives Naomi barley [2: 8- 18]
- H Naomi blesses Boaz [2:19]
- I Boaz is the one in a position to redeem [2:20]
- J Ruth joins Boaz's workers [2:21-23]
- K Naomi and Ruth's plan to obtain rest [3:1-8]
- J' Ruth requests Boaz's protection [3:9]
- I' Ruth asks Boaz to act as Redeemer [3:9]
- H' Boaz blesses Ruth [3:10]
- G' Boaz promises to marry Ruth; gives Naomi barley [3:11-16]
- F' Naomi asks, "Who are you?" [3:16-18]
- E' Boaz goes to Bethlehem [4:1]
- D' Ruth and a field [4:2-12]
- C' Ruth and Naomi's plan ends [4:3]
- B' The Redeemer redeems [4:14-16]
- A' Naomi receives a son [4: 17]

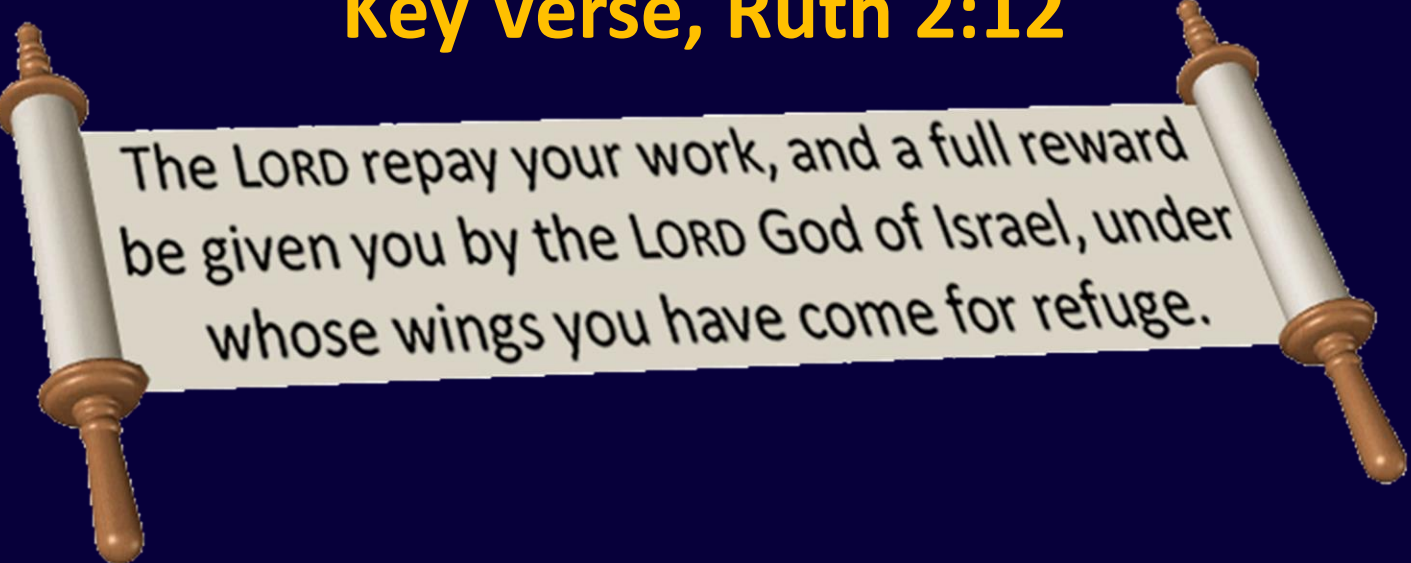
The Book of Ruth



Key Theme

God providentially guides and blesses those who trust Him.

Key Verse, Ruth 2:12

A 3D-rendered scroll with two wooden handles, unrolled to show the text. The scroll is white with black text, and the handles are light brown with a turned design.

The LORD repay your work, and a full reward
be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under
whose wings you have come for refuge.

Ruth is a book of history

History covers:

The Book of Judges, like many histories, presents only the wars and battles of its time. The Book of Ruth deals with what **average people** were doing between those wars.

Real PERSONALITIES

Real PEOPLES

Real PATTERNS

Real PURPOSE

In Tanakh, Ruth & Judges are **1** book

In those days there was no king in Israel, but every man did that which was right in his own eyes.

Judges 17:6: 21:25

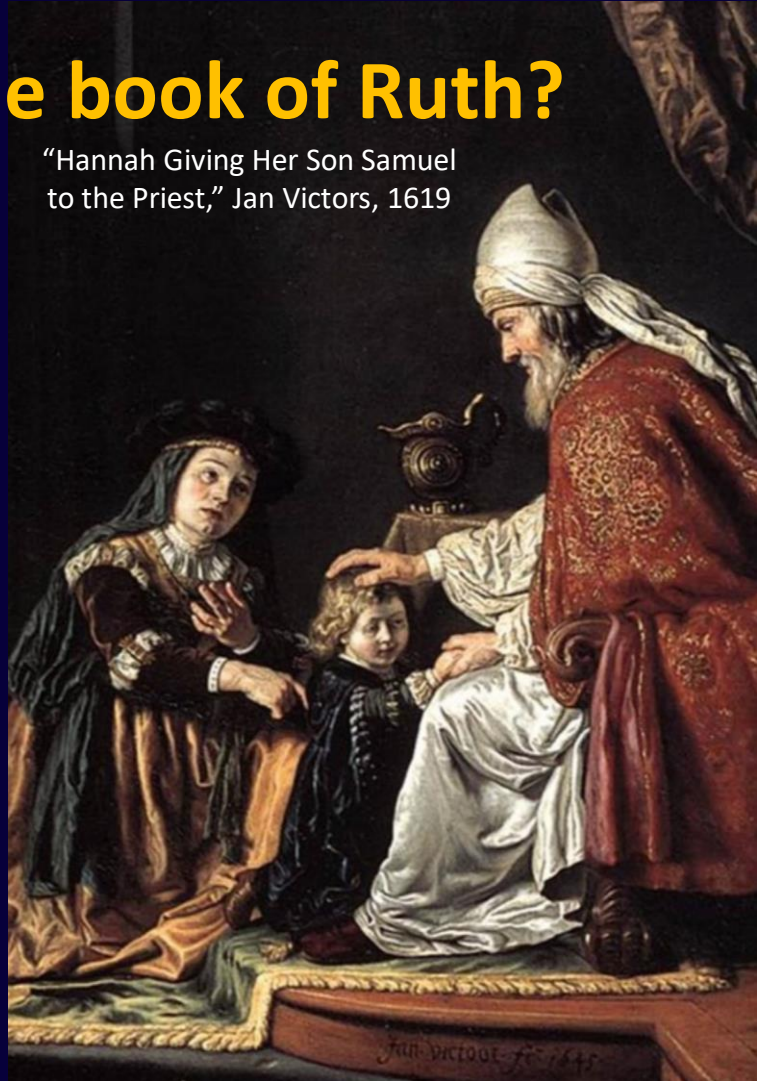
And said unto him [Samuel] , Behold, thou art old, and thy sons walk not in thy ways: now make us a king to judge us like all the nations.

1 Samuel 8:5:25

Who wrote the book of Ruth?

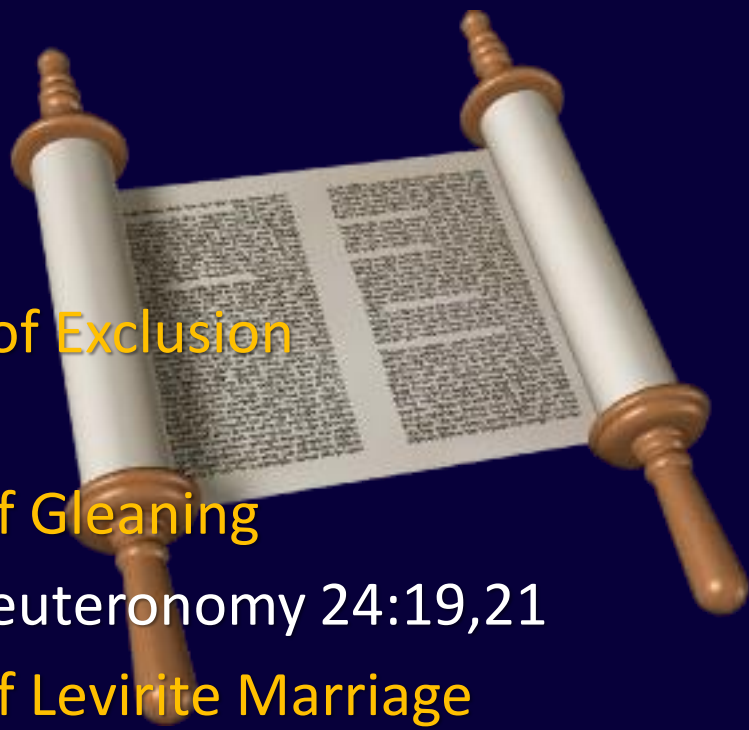
- Israel had no king in Israel in those days (thus, “those days” must be over and a king in power).
- David is named in Ruth 4, but not as king (thus, Saul must be the king at the time of the book).
- Samuel (1088-1008 BC) wrote Ruth (and Judges) to switch people’s thinking from Saul to David.

“Hannah Giving Her Son Samuel to the Priest,” Jan Victors, 1619



Relevant laws of Ancient Israel

- Ruth Chapter 1: Laws of Exclusion
 - Deuteronomy 23:1-6
- Ruth Chapter 2: Law of Gleaning
 - Leviticus 19:9-10; Deuteronomy 24:19,21
- Ruth Chapter 3: Law of Levirate Marriage
 - Deuteronomy 25:5-10
- Ruth Chapter 4: Law of Redemption
 - Leviticus 25:47-55



Outline of the book of Ruth

1

**Love's
Resolve**



In tragedy
Ruth cleaves
to Naomi.

Sorrow

2

**Love's
Response**



Ruth gleanes
in kinsman
Boaz's fields.

Service

3

**Love's
Request**



Action on
the
threshing
floor.

Submission

4

**Love's
Reward**



Redemption
of both land
and bride.

Satisfaction



The Story Thus Far

Chapter One

Love's Resolve

*Ruth cleaves to
Naomi*



Love's Resolve – Ruth cleaves

- Naomi's family fled famine in Judah. Her husband and two sons died in Moab, so she returned to Bethlehem. Believing that her Moabite daughters-in-law would be shunned in Judah, she told them to stay and remarry.



"Naomi and Her Daughters In Law," Minton Parian, 1864

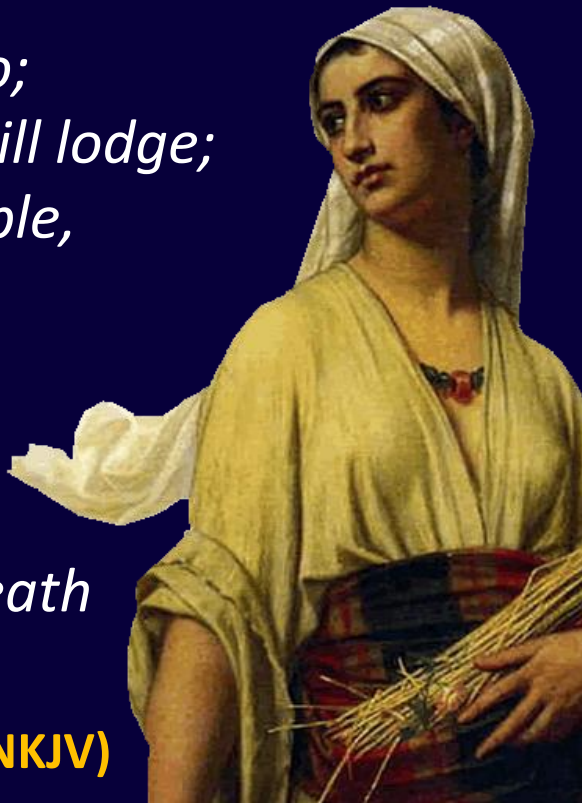
Ruth's Sevenfold Decision



But Ruth said, *“Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you:*

- 1. for wherever you go, I will go;*
- 2. And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;*
- 3. Your people shall be my people,*
- 4. And your God, my God:*
- 5. Where you die, I will die,*
- 6. And there will I be buried,*
- 7. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death part you and me.”*

Ruth 1:16-17 (NKJV)



Love's Resolve – Ruth cleaves

- Naomi's family fled famine in Judah. Her husband and two sons died in Moab, so she returned to Bethlehem. Believing that her Moabite daughters-in-law would be shunned in Judah, she told them to stay and remarry.
- Orpah obeyed, but Ruth chose to stay with Naomi:

"Ruth and Naomi," William Blake, 1795

Where you go, I'll go;
Where you live, I'll live;
Your people are my
people;
Your God is my God;
Where you die, I'll die
and be buried beside
you.



Chapter Two

Love's Response

Ruth gleans



Law of Gleaning

And when ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleanings of thy harvest. And thou shalt not glean thy vineyard, neither shalt thou gather [every] grape of thy vineyard; thou shalt leave them for the poor and stranger.....

Leviticus 19:9-10

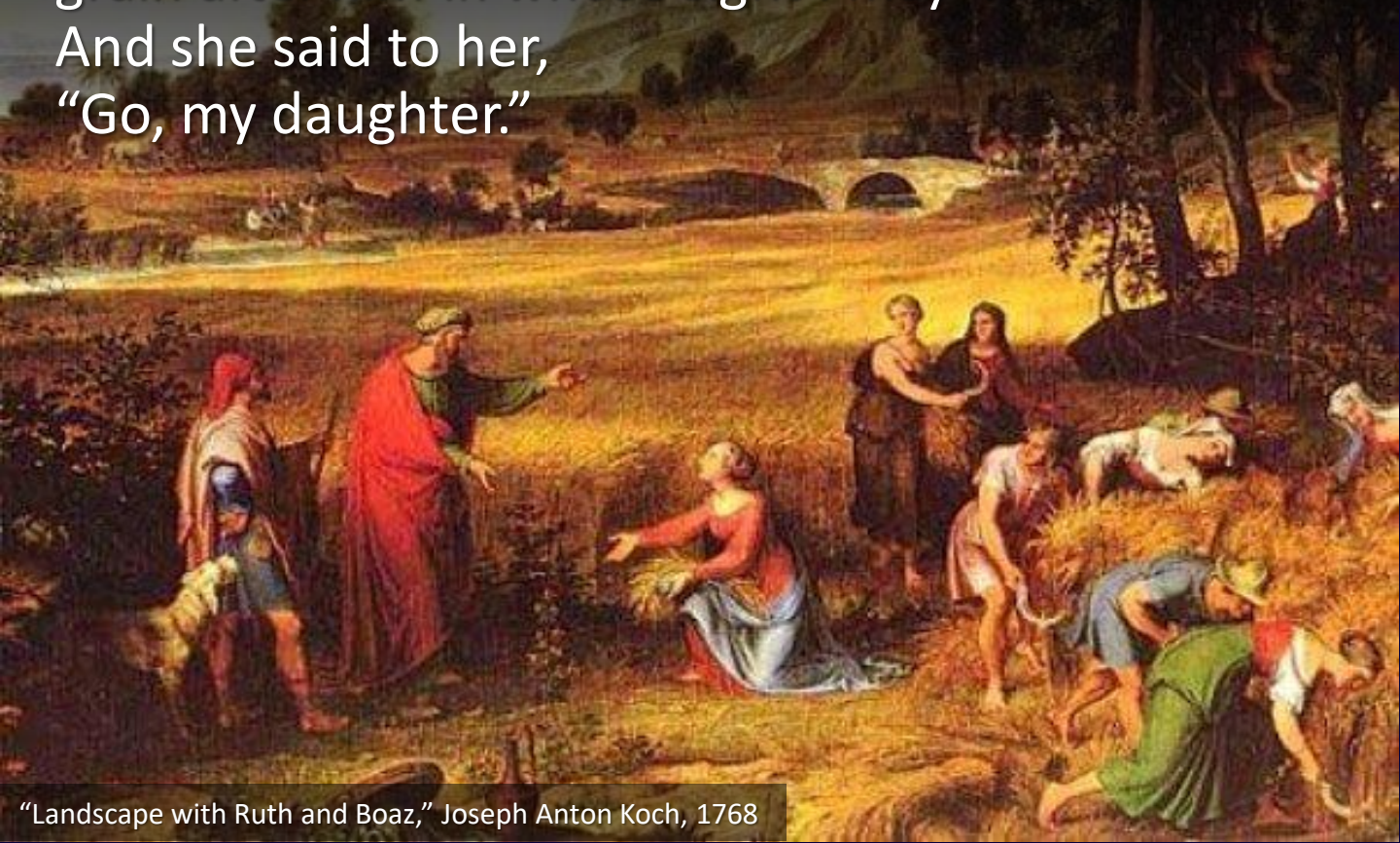
- An ancient welfare system, where a land owner could only make one pass through a field.
- What the reapers missed or was spilled was left for the widows and the destitute.

Ruth 2- Love's Response

¹ There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name *was* Boaz.

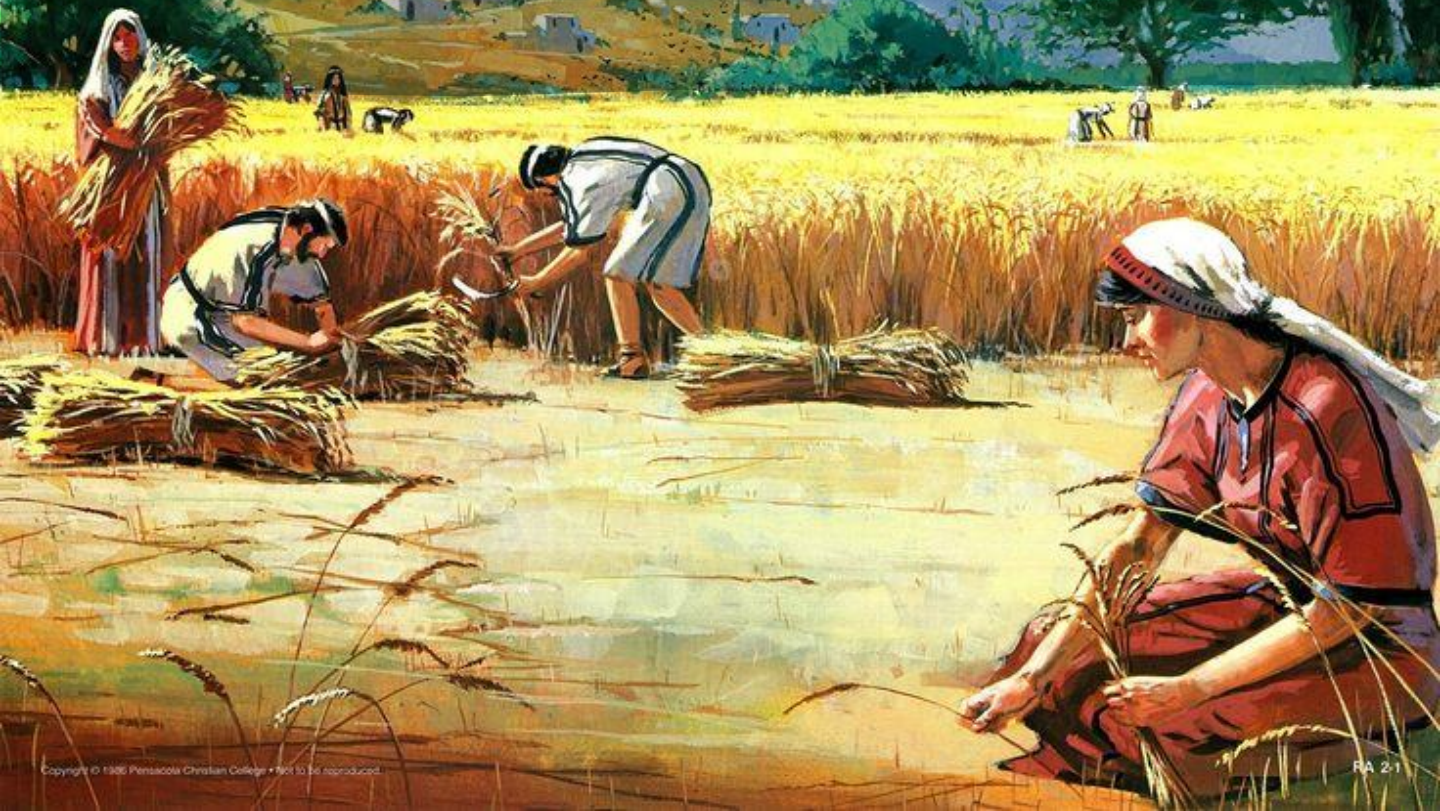


² So Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi,
“Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of
grain after *him* in whose sight I may find favor.”
And she said to her,
“Go, my daughter.”



“Landscape with Ruth and Boaz,” Joseph Anton Koch, 1768

³ Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field *belonging* to Boaz, who *was* of the family of Elimelech.



⁴ Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The LORD *be* with you!" And they answered him, "The LORD bless you!"

⁵ Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers,

"Whose young woman *is* this?"

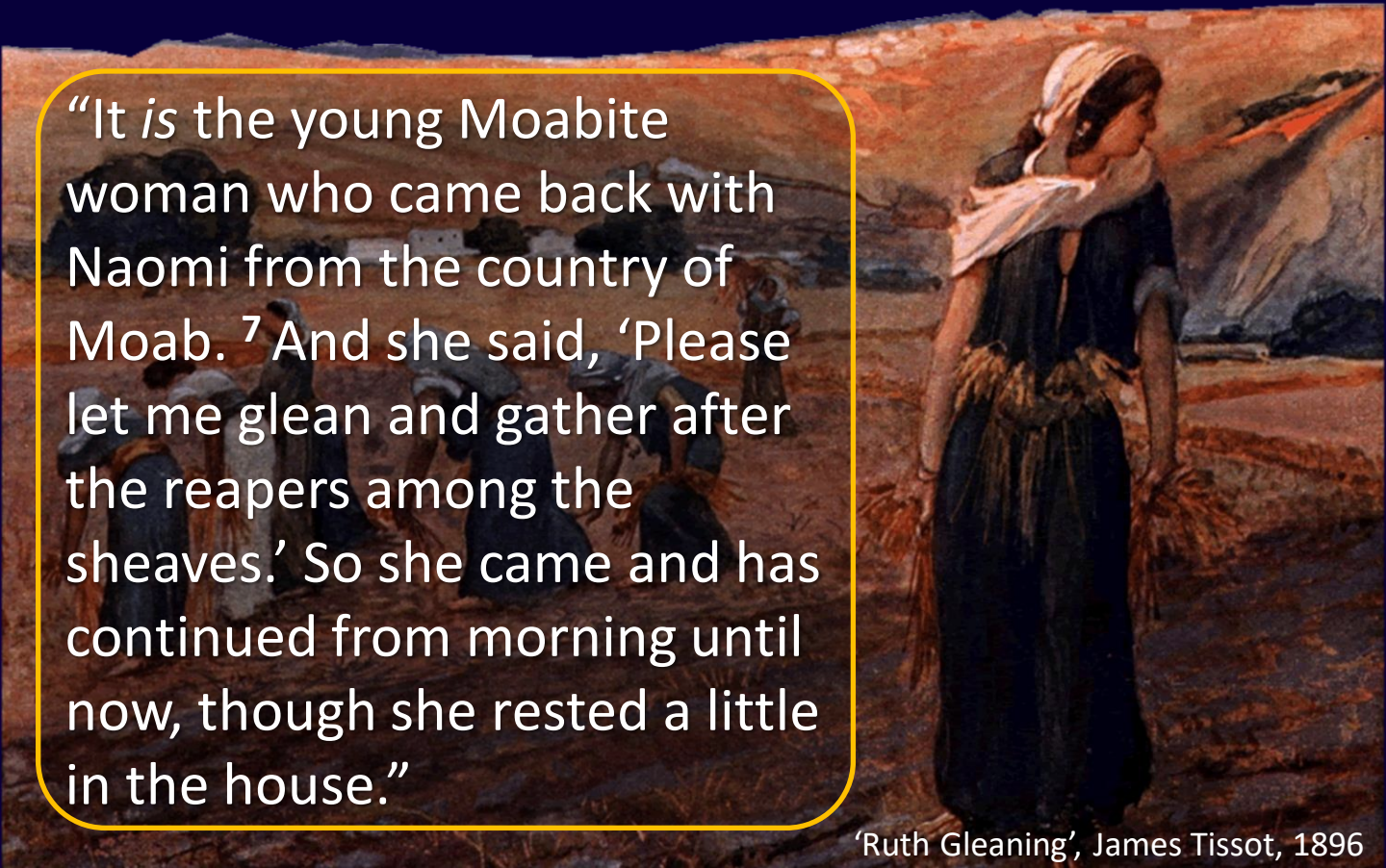


"Boaz and Ruth,"
John Faed, 1860.

⁶ So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said,

“It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. ⁷ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house.”

‘Ruth Gleaning’, James Tissot, 1896



- 8 Then Boaz said to Ruth,
- 9 “You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women.
- 9 *Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.”*



“Ruth and Boaz,” Barent Fabritius, 1660

¹⁰ So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, “Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?”



¹¹ And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. ¹² The LORD repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge."

¹³ Then she said, Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants.





14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, “Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar.”

So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back.

“Ruth and Boaz,” Walter Crane, 1863.

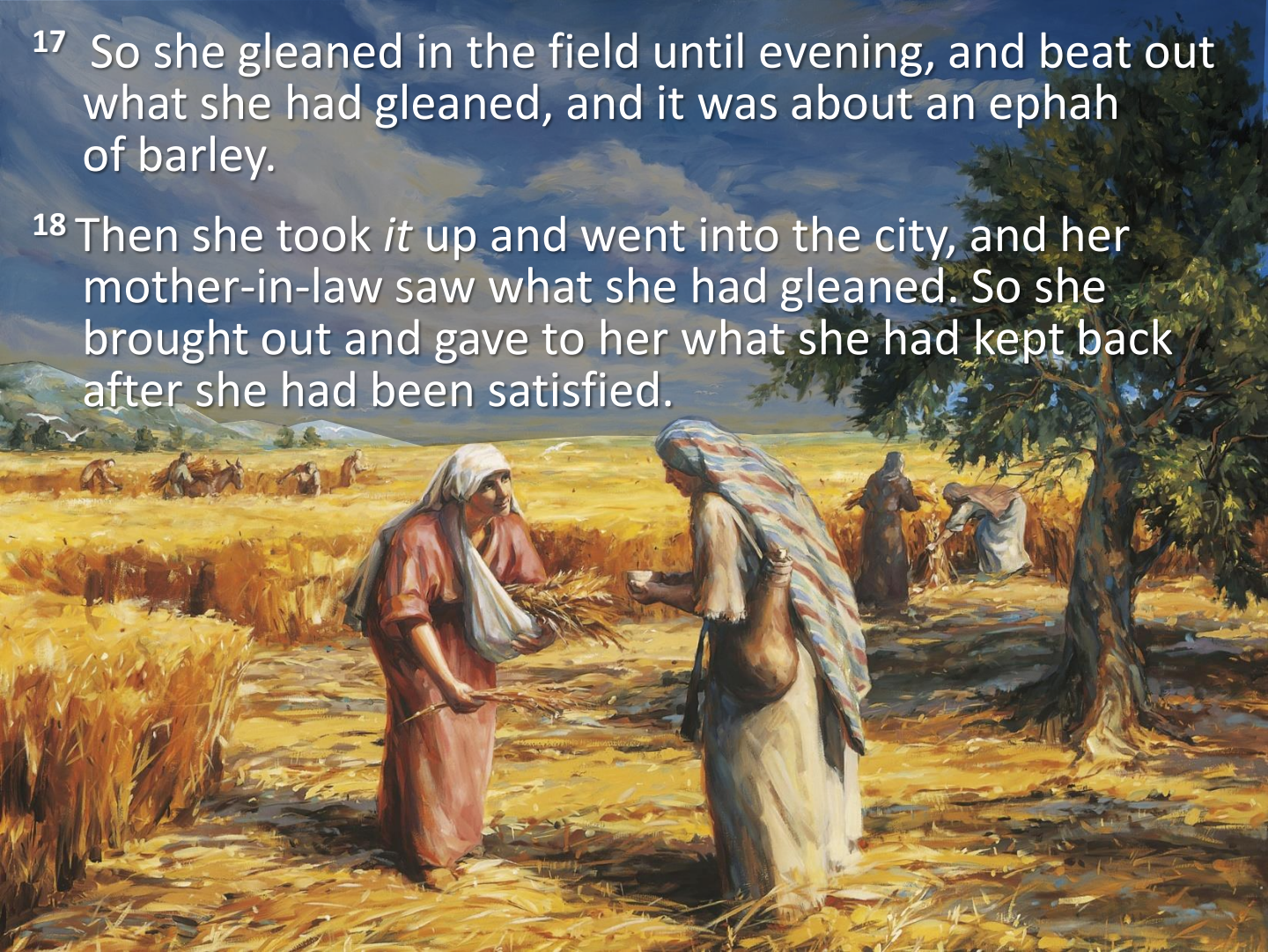
¹⁵ And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. ¹⁶ Also let *grain* from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave *it* that she may glean, and do not rebuke her.”



“Summer,” Nicolas Poussin, 1660.

¹⁷ So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.

¹⁸ Then she took *it* up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied.



¹⁹ And her mother-in-law said to her, “Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed be the one who took notice of you.”

So she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, “The man’s name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz.”

²⁰ Then Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!” And Naomi said to her, “This man *is* a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.”



“Ruth swearing her allegiance to Naomi”, Jan Victors, 1653

²¹ Ruth the Moabite said,
“He also said to me, ‘You
shall stay close by my
young men until they
have finished all my
harvest.’ ”

²² And Naomi said to Ruth
her daughter-in-law, “*It is*
good, my daughter, that
you go out with his young
women, and that people
do not meet you in any
other field.”



23 So she stayed close by the young women of Boaz, to glean until the end of barley harvest and wheat harvest; and she dwelt with her mother-in-law.



Richard Mcbee



Chapter Three

Love's Request

*The threshing
room floor*



Naomi's Issues

1. How could the name of her husband Elimelech be maintained among the tribes of Israel since both sons were now dead?
2. What steps must Naomi take to protect her inheritance which Elimelech had left in Naomi's trust?
3. How could Naomi provide rest and security for her faithful daughter-in-law Ruth?



**Marriage between
Ruth and Boaz would
solve all three
problems.**

Marriage Duty of the Surviving Brother

- ⁵ If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be *married* to a stranger outside *the family*; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her.
- ⁶ And it shall be *that* the firstborn son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

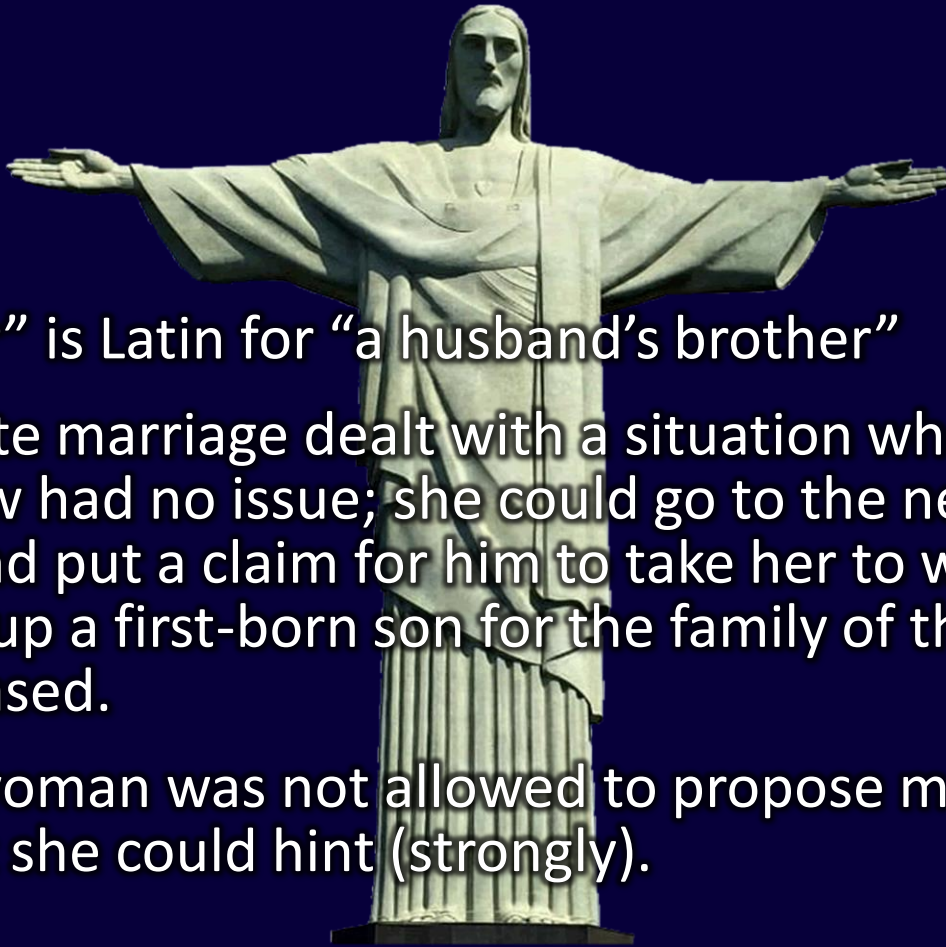
Marriage Duty of the Surviving Brother

⁷ But if the man does not want to take his brother's wife, then let his brother's wife go up to the gate to the elders, and say, 'My husband's brother refuses to raise up a name to his brother in Israel; he will not perform the duty of my husband's brother.'

⁸ Then the elders of his city shall call him and speak to him. But *if* he stands firm and says, 'I do not want to take her,' ⁹ then his brother's wife shall come to him in the presence of the elders, remove his sandal from his foot, spit in his face, and answer and say, 'So shall it be done to the man who will not build up his brother's house.'

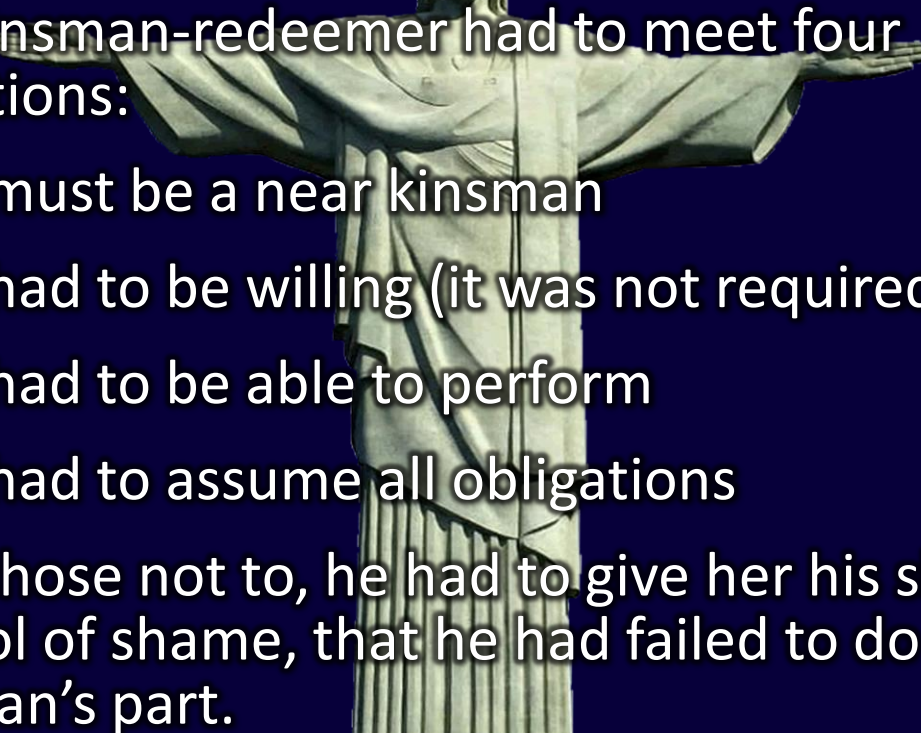
¹⁰ And his name shall be called in Israel, 'The house of him who had his sandal removed.'

Law of Levirite Marriage Deut 25:5-10



- “Levir” is Latin for “a husband’s brother”
- Levirite marriage dealt with a situation where a widow had no issue; she could go to the next of kin and put a claim for him to take her to wife to raise up a first-born son for the family of the deceased.
- A woman was not allowed to propose marriage. But she could hint (strongly).

Law of Levirate Marriage Deut 25:5-10

- 
- The kinsman-redeemer had to meet four conditions:
 - He must be a near kinsman
 - He had to be willing (it was not required)
 - He had to be able to perform
 - He had to assume all obligations
 - If he chose not to, he had to give her his shoe as a symbol of shame, that he had failed to do the kinsman's part.

Our Kinsman-Redeemer

Ruth 3 – Love's Request

- 3 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? ² Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor.



³ Therefore
wash yourself
and anoint
yourself, put
on your best
garment and
go down to
the threshing
floor;

"Ruth and Naomi,"
He Qi, 1994.



Naomi's Four-fold Advice

1. Wash yourself

- Spiritually cleanse.

2. Anoint yourself

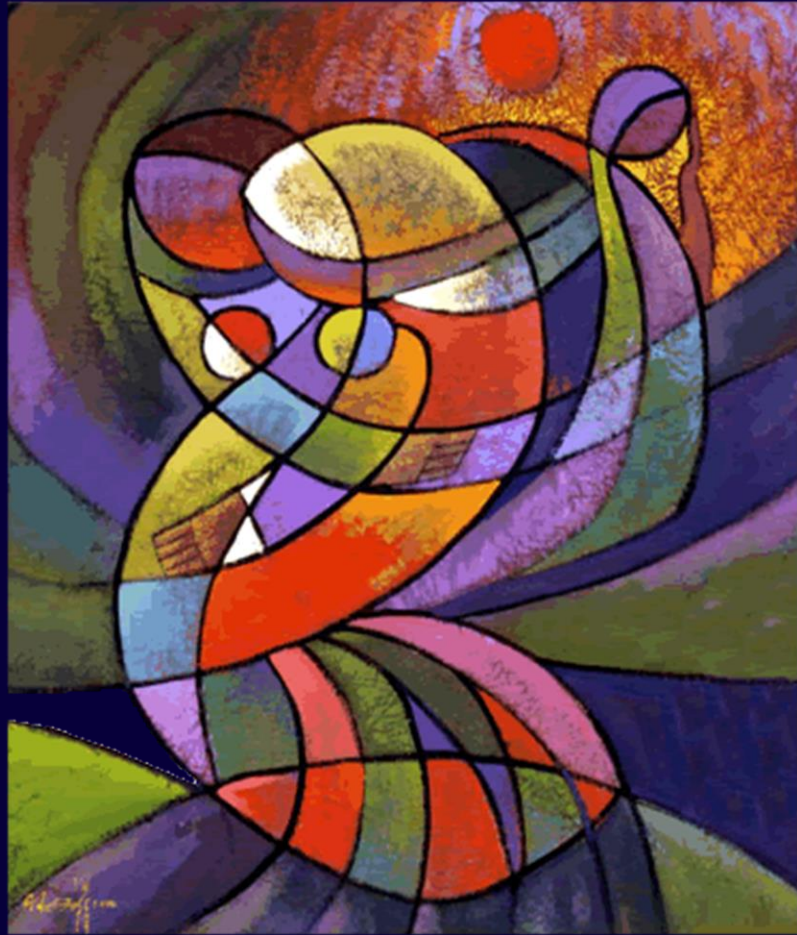
- With the Holy Spirit.

3. Put on good garment

- Finish mourning.

4. Stake your claim

- Ask in prayer.



"Ruth and Naomi,"
He Qi, 1994.

- ³ *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. ⁴ Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do.”
- ⁵ And she said to her, “All that you say to me I will do.”



⁶ So she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law instructed her. ⁷ And after Boaz had eaten and drunk, and his heart was cheerful, he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain; and she came softly, uncovered his feet, and lay down.



"Boaz and Ruth," Charles Lock Eastlake, 1853.

⁸ Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ And he said, “Who are you?”

Boaz awakens with a start to find someone at his feet, and turns over to stare at her. He can't see her clearly.



“Ruth at rest,” Alexandre Cabanel, 1868.

So she answered,
“I *am* Ruth, your
maidservant. Take
your maidservant
under your wing,
for you are a close
relative.”

Handmaid = ‘**amah**
(eligible for marriage)

~~Under your wing~~
Spread your skirt



“Ruth at rest,” Alexandre Cabanel, 1868.

Time of love = maturity

Spread skirt = covenant (marriage)

Swear oath = marriage vow

Thou became mine = my spouse

Ezekiel 16:8

Now when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I swore unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, saith the Lord GOD, and thou becamest mine.

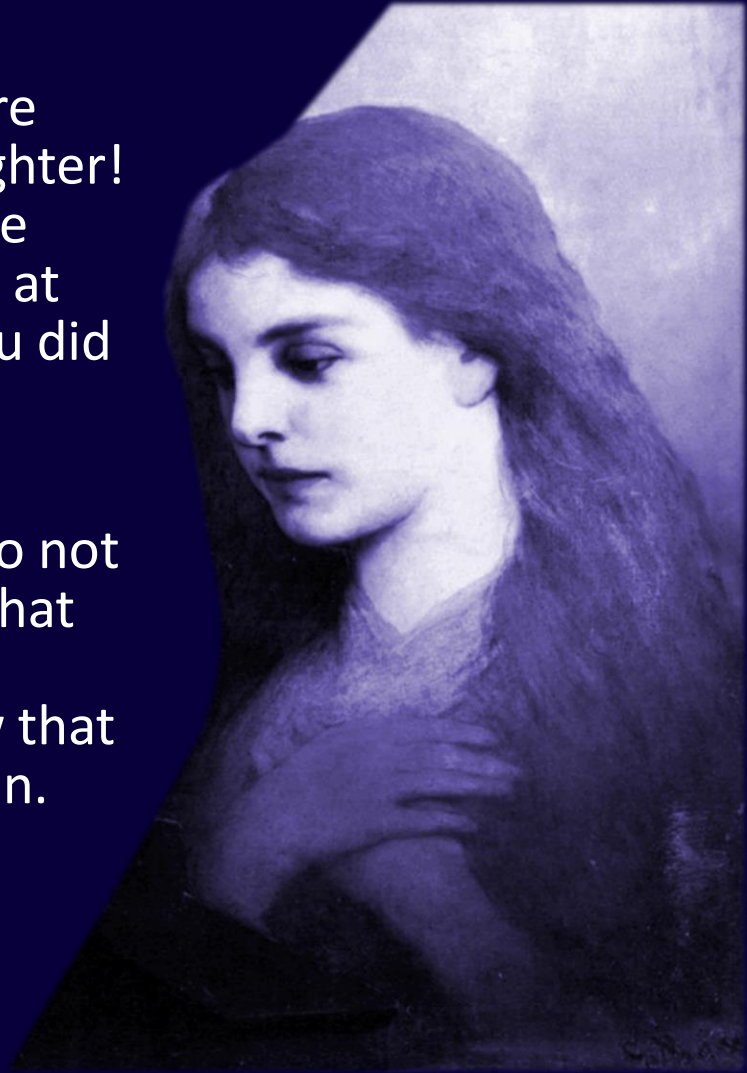
So she answered,
“I *am* Ruth, your
maidservant. Take
your maidservant
under your wing,
for you are a close
relative.”



“Ruth at rest,” Alexandre Cabanel, 1868.

¹⁰ Then he said, “Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go after young men, whether poor or rich.

¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you *are* a virtuous woman.



¹² Now it is true that I *am* a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I.

¹³ Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be *that* if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.”



¹⁴ So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another. Then he said, “Do not let it be known that the woman came to the threshing floor.” ¹⁵ Also he said, “Bring the shawl that *is* on you and hold it.” And when she held it, he measured six *ephahs* of barley, and laid *it* on her. Then she went into the city.



16 When she came to her mother-in-law, she said, “Is that you, my daughter?” Then she told her all that the man had done for her. 17 And she said, “These six *ephahs* of barley he gave me; for he said to me, ‘Do not go empty-handed to your mother-in-law.’ ”

18 Then she said, “Sit still, my daughter, until you know how the matter will turn out; for the man **will not rest** until he has concluded the matter this day.”

