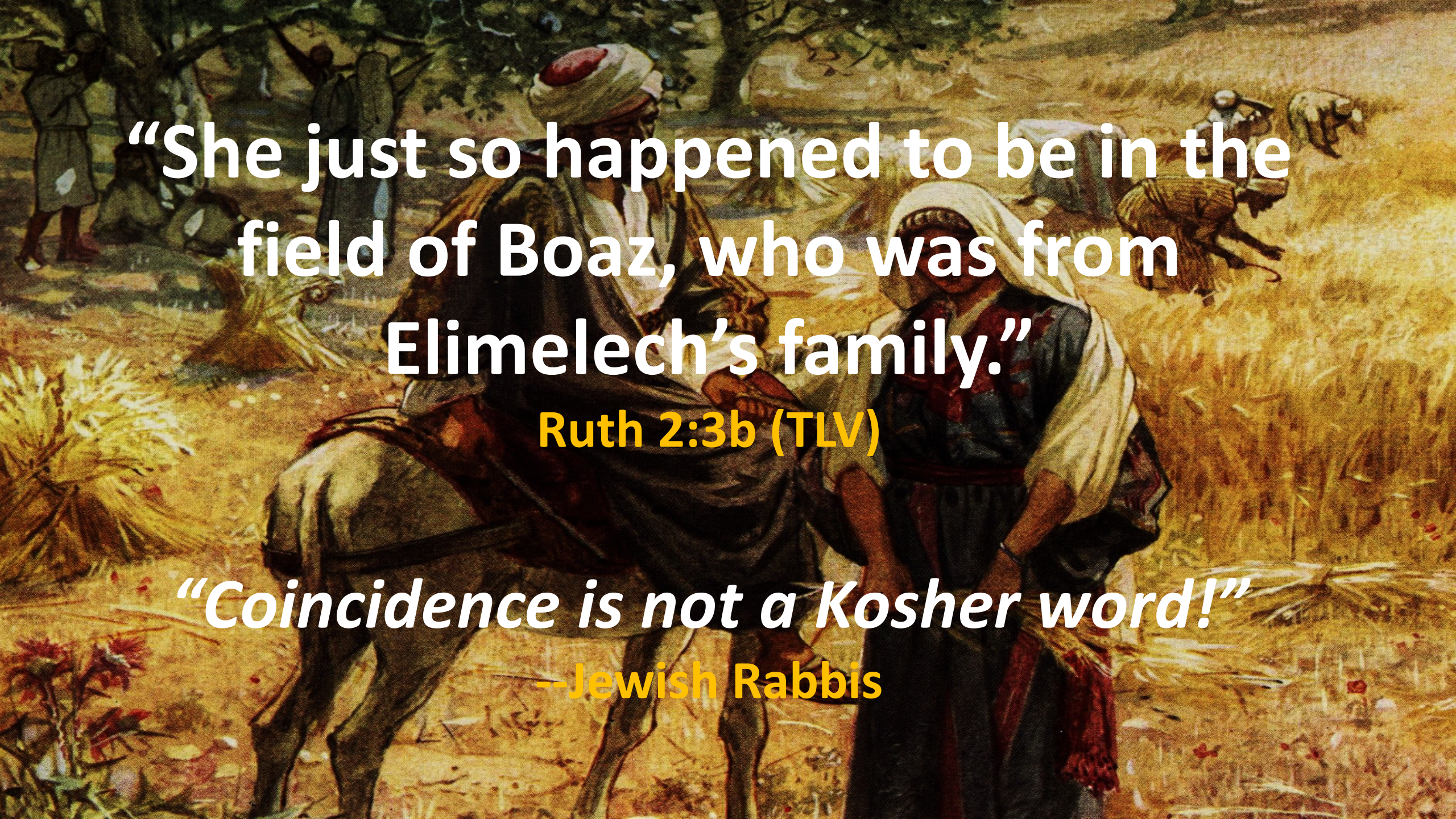


The Book of Ruth
God's Plan of Redemption
in a Love Story

Introduction



**“She just so happened to be in the
field of Boaz, who was from
Elimelech’s family.”**

Ruth 2:3b (TLV)

“Coincidence is not a Kosher word!”

--Jewish Rabbis

OVERVIEW

RUTH

Wt. 1000
500

JOY &
BIRTH

DAVID

BOLDNESS
LOYALTY

TRAGEDY
& DEATH

MOAB

Run

URGENT FACT COLLECTED

ISRAEL

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Real event, darkest days (*spiritually + physically*) of Israel
- **Time of Judges**, “cycles of sin,” Israel departed from God, got into trouble, called upon Him and He delivered them, over and over again.
- In this dark time, one of most beautiful love stories ever.
- Represents most amazing grace and love ever shown in mankind’s history, the **love of God for His people**.



BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- A “type,” story/elements real events, but represent something much greater, critical to God’s plan.
- Reveals general nature of God’s plan of redemption for both Israel and Gentiles.
- **Proclaims hope**, ray of light shining in dark time.
- Love story for all ages, elegant timeless example of beautiful literature. *But so much more.*
- Beautifully constructed, easy to read/understand, considered one of most beautifully written pieces in all literature.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction



- Described as “*an exquisitely wrought jewel of Hebrew narrative art.*” (unknown source).
- Goethe said it is “*the loveliest complete work on a small scale.*”
- Narrative flows easily, beautifully. No poetry in this book (*only 7 books in the Old Testament contain no poetry: Leviticus, Ruth, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Haggai, and Malachi*).

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Actual history, also **prophetic**. Not parable or mere story. Real meaning well beyond characters.
- Hebrew = *Megilath Ruth*, “Scroll of Ruth,” one of five “scrolls” (*Megillot*) “Writings” (Ketuvim) part of Hebrew Bible (Tanakh). (*Christian Bible in “History” division, follows Judges, before 1 Samuel*)
- Book named after “heroine.” Name likely originally a Moabite name, may have been changed to Hebrew “Rut” = “friend.”

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Set in time of Judges, period about 350 years. Boaz son of Rahab (*Rahav*) prostitute of Jericho who hid spies, and Salmon (*Salma*) early in this time period. Boaz older than Ruth, so can assume events within first 50-75 years following conquest, or about 1200 BC (*approximate!*).
- No one knows author. By tradition = prophet Samuel, last judge of Israel before monarchy.
- **Written well after Judges** into David's reign as king (David mentioned in genealogy in final verse (*may have been appended later*)).

HISTORICAL SETTING:

- Last verse of Judges sets tone for this time period: *“In those days there was no king in Israel; every man did what which was right in his own eyes.”* (Judges 21:25)
- Chilling statement about dark time in Israel’s history, period of moral and spiritual degeneracy.
- Ruth = stark contrast. Faithful to God she didn’t even know.
- God’s Laws still in place, but people in general disobedient/wayward. God uses many means to discipline, including famine

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Withholds rains for crops, food scarce. Apparently caused Elimelech to leave Israel and go to Moab with his family.
- **Begins in Israel**, but with a family left to seek “better times” in neighboring Moab, a place and people generally hated by Hebrew people.
- **Ends back in Israel**, in Bethlehem Ephrata, city in land of Judah, ~ 5 miles south of Jerusalem.
- **Begins in exile, ends in return to land God gave His people, with fullness restored. Highly symbolic of God’s plan.** *(Look for all the types!)*
- Also beautiful close-up look of life in Israel at this time.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction



- **LAWS AND CUSTOMS OF THE TIMES CRITICAL TO UNDERSTANDING THIS BOOK.**
- Story won't make much sense, unless we understand traditions of that time.
- Five basic customs/laws that are a **MUST** to understand.

(1) Law of the Sojourner (Alien):

- *“And if a stranger dwells with you in your land, you shall not mistreat him. The stranger who dwells among you shall be to you as one born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.”*
Leviticus 19:33-34 (also Deut. 10:18)
- “Alien” allowed to join camp of Israel, actually become an Israelite if they believe in and worship One true God of Israel (*see story of Rahab in Joshua*).
- Were to live with them, be circumcised, and celebrate feasts – *In other words, do just as Hebrews did.*

(2) Laws of Gleaning:

- God made provision for poor. His “welfare system.” He provided, but still had to work for it. *“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you gather every grape of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger: I am the LORD your God.”* (Leviticus 19: 9-10)
- Harvesters could only do one pass, not all way to edges. Leave for poor, give opportunity to gather what was left.
- For all poor, including strangers, aliens, widows

(3) Laws of Inheritance

- God owned land “ *‘The land shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine; for you are strangers and sojourners with Me. And in all the land of your possession you shall grant redemption of the land.’* (Leviticus 25:23-24).
- Apportioned (leased) land to Israelites. Provision to keep land apportioned correctly, to reclaim (*redeem*) if sold to someone in another tribe, or stranger (Gentile).
- Land to remain among Israelites, passed down to heirs, kept in family/tribes. Did not pass one tribe to another. *(see Leviticus 25 for more info on the laws of inheritance and redemption)*

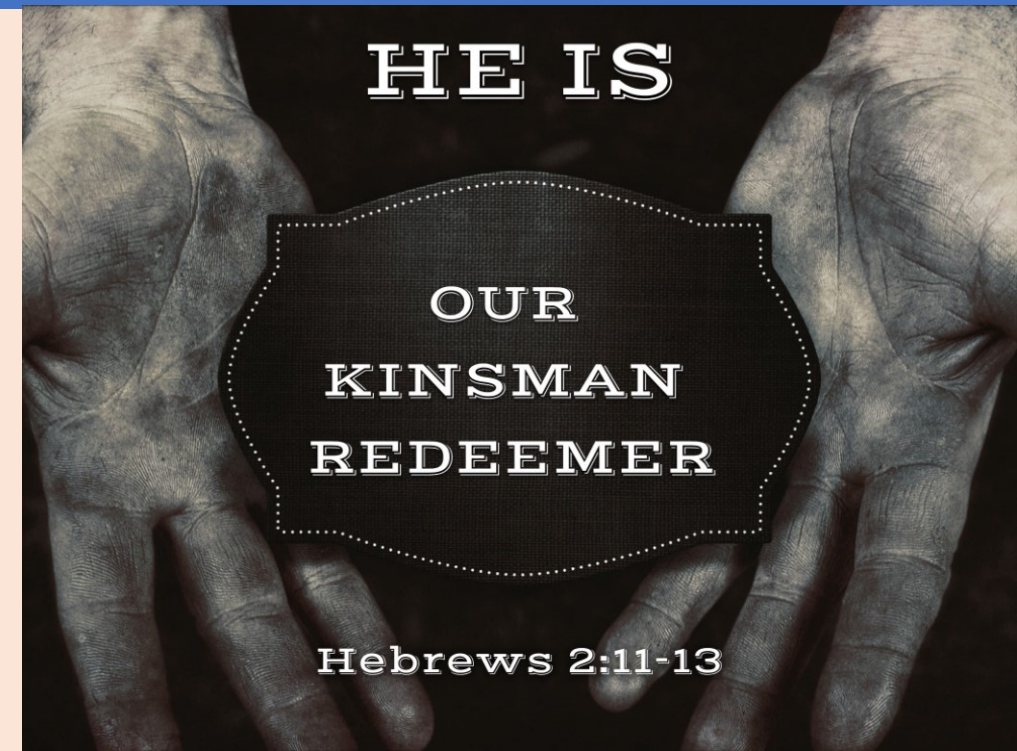
(4) Laws of Kinsman Redeemer (Redeeming Relative)

- Established in Law of Moses, Leviticus 25: *“Now if a sojourner or stranger close to you becomes rich, and one of your brethren who dwells by him becomes poor, and sells himself to the stranger or sojourner close to you, or to a member of the stranger’s family, after he is sold he may be redeemed again. One of his brothers may redeem him; or his uncle or his uncle’s son may redeem him; or anyone who is near of kin to him in his family may redeem him; or if he is able he may redeem himself..”* (47-49)
- If person forced to sell part of land, or had sold even himself into slavery, could be redeemed (*bought back*) by near relative = **Kinsman Redeemer** (*“near relative who buys back,”* **GOEL**, Hebrew).

- **Rules:** Kinsman-redeemer *must*
 - 1) be closely related to one who is redeemed
 - 2) be able to pay price set for redemption (*negotiated with owner of land or contract*)
 - 3) assume all obligations (*might also include marrying a widow who was childless, in order to provide an heir, if family desired*).
- **Purpose** = to keep land in God-ordained distribution among tribes, provide options for those in need.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Applied to redeeming: land, relatives in slavery, marrying a widow and providing an heir to the land, to avenge killing of a relative, and to receive restitution for wrongs.
- In Ruth, **applied for two reasons** – 1) redeem Elimelech's land (*which he may have sold before he left Israel*), and 2) provide heir for both Naomi and Ruth (*widows of father and son*), and *care for them*.



...and, more importantly, to serve as “type” for ultimate kinsman-redeemer Yeshua!

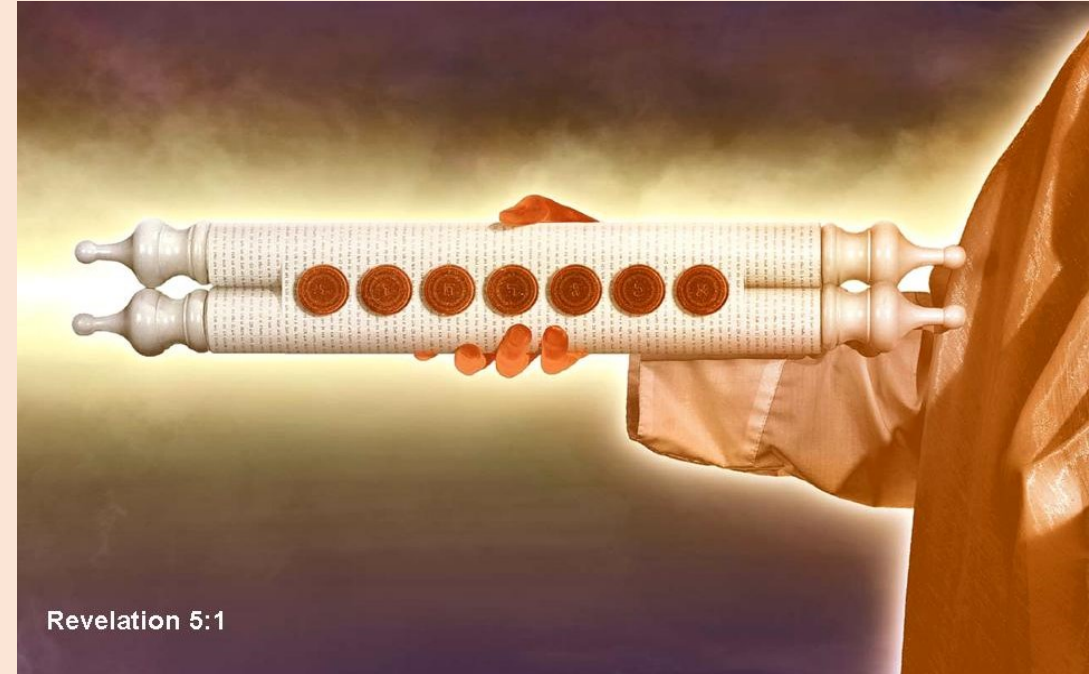
BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- INTERESTING NOTE: traditional to draw up deed of “title” although deed not for ownership, but use of land only. God owns the land.
- Terms of deed, including redemption, **written on outside of scroll**. Thought by some to influence understanding of Revelation, and scroll the Lamb opened (Revelation 5).
- Some believe this scroll was title deed to earth. Others think it is official “ketubah” (*traditional contract of marriage*) with our Bridegroom.
Perhaps both.



BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Sealed Scroll: Revelation 5 *“And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, “Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?”* (Revelation 5:1-2)
- When land sold/leased among tribes in Israel, deed written. **INSIDE** - terms of sale. **OUTSIDE** instructions for redeeming land. Then rolled up and sealed.



BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Often missed detail vital to understanding Revelation, and exactly who one worthy to open the scroll is, and what function He fulfilled.
- Scroll in Revelation 5 written "*within and on the backside,*" ...identifies it as deed subject to redemption.
- Kinsman of Adam (*all humanity*), in role as **goel**, a **Kinsman-redeemer**, taking possession of what He already purchased with His blood as sacrificial Lamb.
- Not only purchased land (*entire earth*); also a Bride.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction



*Boaz, kinsman-redeemer in Ruth, =
TYPE for Jesus in role for all of us.*

- Only one worthy to open this scroll (Revelation), worthy, able and willing to fulfill role necessary for redemption (for Bride and Land), = our **GOEL, our Kinsman Redeemer, Yeshua HaMashiach** (*Jesus the Messiah*).

(5) Laws of Levirate Marriage

- Unusual custom, to western sensibilities, in practice well before Law (*not just Israel, many ancient cultures also*).
- “Levirate” from Latin **LEVIR** = “**husband’s brother**” or “brother-in-law.”
- practice for widow, whose dead husband had not given her any children to inherit land, to seek husband’s closest kin to fill that role
- Goes *hand in hand* with laws of kinsman-redeemer

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

Deuteronomy 25:5-10 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. 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.’*

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- **Tamar** knew of this practice in Genesis 38. Judah denied her this right, so **she tricked him** into fulfilling role of her “kinsman redeemer.” (*her son in line of Messiah*)
- Kinsman had choice, but would suffer shame of denying widow (“sandal removed”). Not strictly required, but **considered act of love** toward dead male kin and his wife.
- **Not automatic.** Widow had to request. Will see this as Ruth seeks Boaz to perform “redemption” for her.



BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Ruth important book for Bride of Messiah; reveals practice (*points to ultimate*) of “Kinsman Redeemer,” (Boaz) who represents Messiah, our husband.
- **Basic theme** of Ruth = **REDEMPTION**. Some say God’s greatest work was creation. But others say redemption.
- *Very small part of scripture dedicated to creation*, but **MOST of Bible devoted to His plan of redemption**. This plan cost our God His Son’s life.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Interesting, Ruth read during Feast of Weeks (*Shavuot, Pentecost*) by all Jews today.
- Holy Spirit came at this “appointed time,” marked beginning of Church, *ekklesia*, “called out ones.”
- Ruth considered **prophetic of *ekklesia*** (“Church”). Church hidden in OT, mystery revealed by Paul in Ephesians 3, clearly foreshadowed in Ruth.



BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Keep in mind: God spoke to Hosea: *“I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets.”* (Hosea 12:10)
- Word “similitudes” = Hebrew *damah*, = to liken, compare, be like, resemble.
- Stories in scripture never just “stories.” Often represent a truth, a part of God’s overall plan of redemption.
Exceptionally true of Ruth.

- Simple story, only four chapters, reads like 4-act play.

CAST OF CHARACTERS:

- **Elimelech** *“My God is King”* – Naomi’s husband, father to Mahlon and Chilion. During famine he moved his family from home in Bethlehem (Judah’s apportioned land) to Moab, to find a better life. Before this time must have sold his land. Died in Moab.
- **Moab** *land of pagan gentiles, hated by Hebrews. Moabites caused a lot of grief as the Israelites passed through their land on the way to conquer Canaan. Enemies ever since.*

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- **Noami** *“pleasantness, or my delight”* – Wife of Elimelech, moved with family to Moab. Later calls herself “Mara” = bitter. Epitome of “Jewish Mama.” Very clever dealings with Boaz when she remembers their Kinsman-Redeemer.
- **Mahlon** *“sickly”* – Son of Elimelech and Naomi. Married a Moabite (frowned upon by Israelites, God told them *NOT to intermarry*). Died in Moab. Don’t know which son married which Moabite. Not important.
- **Chilion** *“wasting away, pining, puny”* – Son of Elimelech and Naomi. Married Moabite, died in Moab leaving Gentile widow.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- **Orpah** *“stiff necked, like fawn, gazelle”* Moabite woman (Gentile) married to one of Elimelech and Naomi’s sons. Becomes widow when he dies. Initially begins journey back to Bethlehem with Naomi but turns back at Naomi’s urging. Nothing more about Orpah.
- **Ruth** *“friend, friendship, partner”* – Gentile woman from Moab, married one son of Elimelech and Naomi. Widowed. Stays with Naomi, returns with her to Bethlehem. Marries Boaz. Great grandmother of King David, in genealogical line of Messiah.

- **BOAZ** *“in him is strength”* – Near relative of Elimelech’s, qualified to be Naomi/Ruth’s Kinsman-Redeemer (Goel). Apparently wealthy farmer, city official, very kind, generous and fair. Person of authority. Fulfills role of Kinsman-Redeemer to restore Elimelech’s land to his widow and daughter-in-law, and marries Ruth to provide heir for the land. Great grandfather of King David.
- **“UNNAMED SERVANT”** –common “type” in scripture always represents Holy Spirit. Ruth introduced to Boaz by unnamed servant. *Bride of Messiah is introduced to her Redeemer by Holy Spirit.*

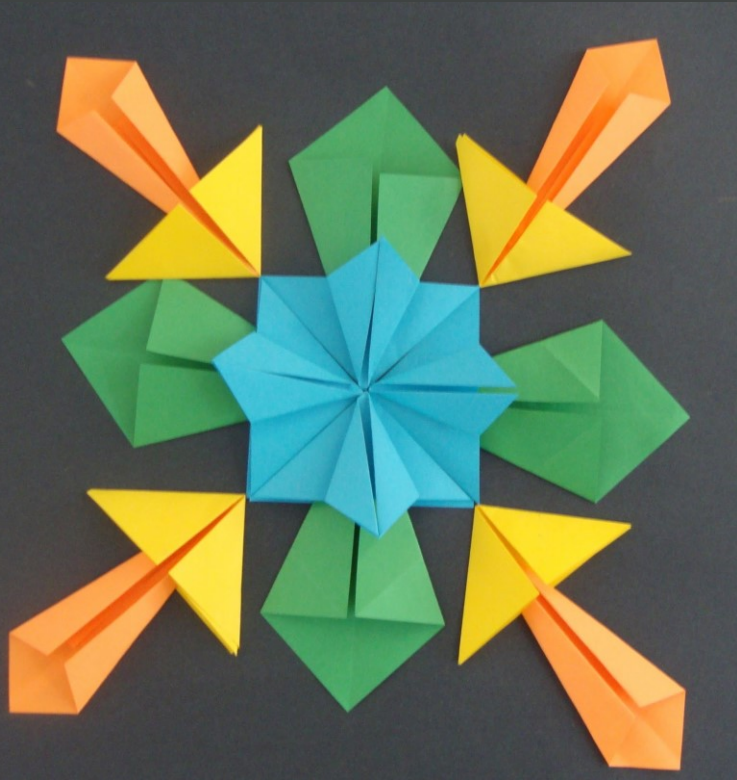
BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- **UNNAMED “NEARER KINSMAN”** – relative nearer than Boaz to become Kinsman Redeemer. Initially interested in redeeming land, but when knew he would also have to serve as “father” of any heir for Elimelech’s land (*marry Ruth*) he decided he did not want to tangle himself in this situation. Could not leave land to his sons. He gave up his sandal after this decision, *his actions considered shameful*.

- **BEAUTIFUL “TYPE” REPRESENTING GOD’S MASTER PLAN OF REDEMPTION...ALL CHARACTERS HAVE MEANING, REPRESENT OTHER PLAYERS.**

Keep this in mind. *Will discuss symbolic roles later.*





Amazing Symmetry

- RUTH incredibly symmetrical. Begins → depression and distress, ends → **provision and hope**. Very brief, but all details provided.
- “Turning point” of each episode = *exactly in center*. Beginning lines of each of 4 “acts” provide points of main development, serve as introductions to remaining action.
- Closing line of each act/chapter transition to what follows.

BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction



- Use of great contrast for effect.

Naomi (*“pleasant”*) ← → **Mara** (*“bitter”*)

Fullness ← → **emptiness**

living ← → **dead**

famine ← → **harvest**

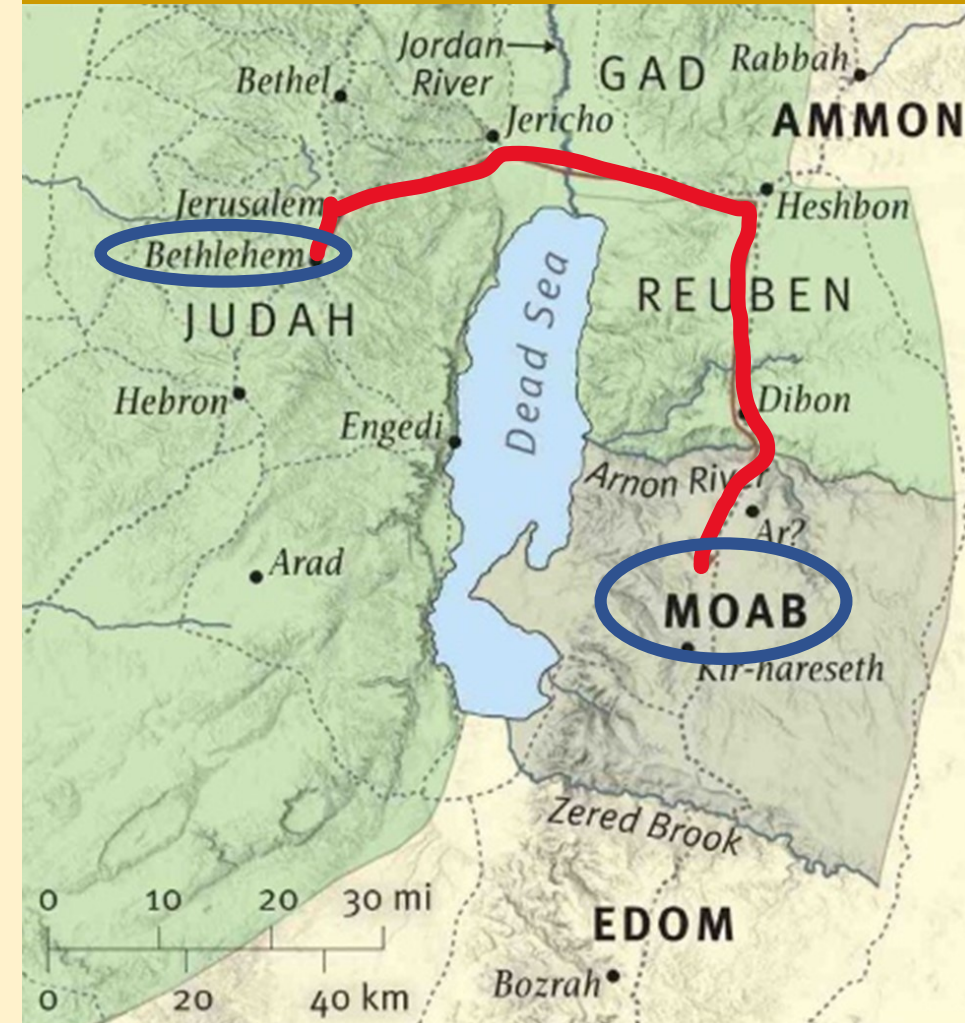
Look for others

- No distractions. Story central, not diluted with details not relevant. **Every aspect keeps reader’s attention on understanding main events.**

4 ACT Play Summarized:

- Elimelech (Hebrew) moves family from Bethlehem in Judah to Moab, *for a better life* since famine in Israel.
- 10 years later, man + two sons die, after sons marry Moabite girls (Orpah and Ruth). Naomi (wife), + two daughters-in-law now widows.
- Famine over in Israel, Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem.

Act I (Chapter 1)



- Orpah and Ruth begin to return with her, but Naomi discourages them.
- Orpah returns home in Moab, but Ruth is going to stick with Naomi. Ruth proclaims her love for Naomi, willingness to serve her, and her God.
- Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem at beginning of barley harvest. Are essentially destitute.

Act I (Chapter 1)



4 ACT Play Summarized:

- Wealthy landowner Boaz introduced, “just happens” to be relative of Naomi’s dead husband Elimelech.
- Because of great need, Ruth goes into fields to glean leftovers from harvest.
- Boaz takes notice, protects and provides for Ruth. Has heard of her faithfulness to Naomi.

Act II (Chapter 2)



- Naomi impressed with what Ruth brings back, questions her about her day.
- Naomi realizes in whose field Ruth worked, “light bulbs” come on. Remembering God’s provision for a kinsman-redeemer, praises God. Naomi begins to “hatch her plan.”
- Ruth continues to glean in Boaz’ fields, under his protection.

Act II (Chapter 2)



4 ACT Play Summarized:

- Naomi has plan to provide husband for Ruth/redeem land. Tells Ruth get cleaned up, go down to threshing floor secretly. Boaz and harvesters would be there.
- Instructs Ruth to find Boaz after everyone goes to sleep, then lie down at his feet, uncover his feet, and wait for Boaz to further instruct her. (*Boaz will know!*)
- Ruth obeys Naomi's instructions.

Act III (Chapter 3)



BOOK OF RUTH: Introduction

- Boaz wakens, surprised. Ruth asks him to *“spread your skirt over your maidservant, for you are next of kin.”* (traditional request)
- Boaz blesses Ruth, says there is closer kinsman, but will do what Ruth requested if other kinsman will not fulfill duty.
- Ruth sleeps at Boaz’ feet. Rose early to return undetected. Boaz fills her “veil” with six measures of barley, signal to Naomi.

Act III (Chapter 3)



4 ACT Play Summarized:

- Begins at “city gate,” Boaz asks nearer kinsman to sit. Gathered elders, explained situation. Also explains he is kinsman, but other “unnamed” kinsman closer.
- First other kinsman agrees to redeem land. But Boaz explains also involves Levirate marriage to provide heir for that land, backs out, fearful of own inheritance.

Act IV (Chapter 4)

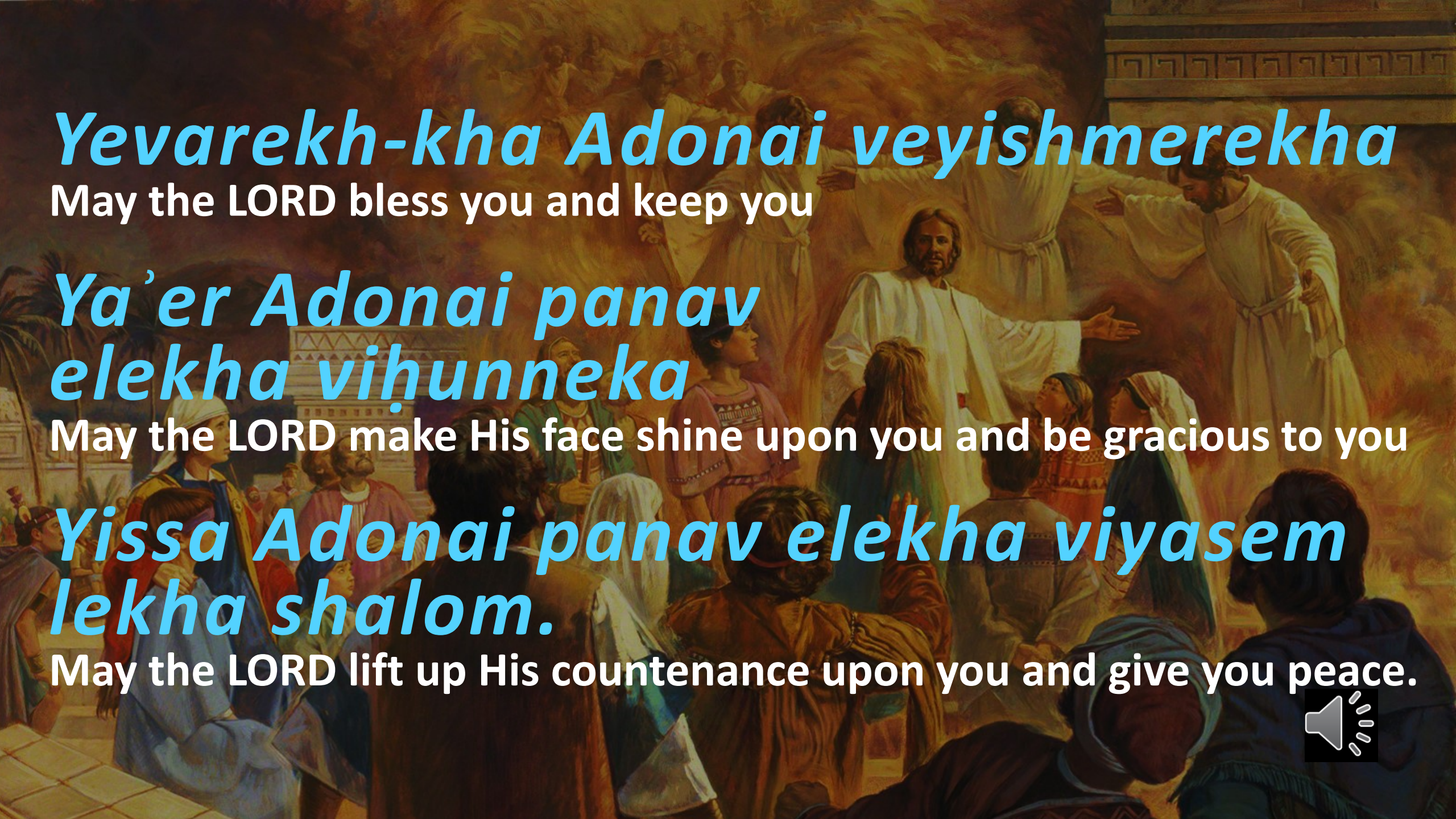


Per tradition, man removed his sandal. Tells Boaz to be “goel.”

- Boaz calls elders as witnesses, he will be kinsman-redeemer for all that was Elimelech's (*and his sons*), from Naomi. Elders offer blessing.
- Boaz marries Ruth, have a son Obed (*grandfather of King David*). Naomi rejoices, neighbor ladies bless her.
- Genealogy through to King David. Obed, Jesse, David.

Act IV (Chapter 4)





Yevarekh-kha Adonai veyishmerekha

May the LORD bless you and keep you

***Ya'er Adonai panav
elekha vihunneka***

May the LORD make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you

***Yissa Adonai panav elekha viyasem
lekha shalom.***

May the LORD lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace.

