

The Choice: *Redeem* or *Refuse* (4:1-12)

At the gate, life-changing transactions were made. Personal business and civic affairs were decided, justice and judgement were administered, legal contracts were made and absolved, sentences of life and death were dispensed. It was at Bethlehem's gate that Boaz's future would be decided.

The matter to be determined on this day would profoundly affect far more than those involved. Although it was a costly decision, what each man did not realize was that his obedience to God would result in an opportunity that would exceed all thoughts and dreams he may have had for his future. He must decide whether he would pay the price and redeem the opportunity or reject the proposition and fade into obscurity.

Like Boaz and the near-kinsman, we may not know what blessings God intends to bestow upon us if we will obey Him. And like them, we must decide whether the present cost is worth future reward.

Deuteronomy 28:1-2 says, *"If you listen obediently to the voice of God, your God, and heartily obey all His commandments that I command you today... blessings will come down on you and spread out beyond you because you have responded to the voice of God, your God"* (MSG).

Read Ruth 4:1-6.

1. How were matters of import decided within each city and/or community? What type of authority did these men have? (See Deuteronomy 21:18-21 for an example.) Why was their opinion of Ruth important? (Ruth 3:11)
2. Who crossed Boaz's path as he waited?
3. What is revealed about Naomi's efforts to provide for herself and Ruth? (v.3)

4. Per Numbers 36:7-9, why was the land to be offered to these men first?

5. Why was it important to God that the land remain in the Israelites' possession, more specifically in the possession of tribes and families? (Read Genesis 12:7, 13:14-17, 35:11-12, and Numbers 33:54.)

6. Now turn to Leviticus 25 and read verses 23-34. What is the purpose of this law? Who does it benefit? (Also consider the widow's lot.)

7. Return to Ruth. Boaz did not disregard or downplay God's instructions to get what he wanted. How is this apparent in the text?

Are you willing to obey the Word of God over your own desires? In which areas of life do you find this to be particularly difficult?

8. How does God bless obedience? Read Leviticus 26:3-12, Proverbs 16:20, and John 14:21, 23.ⁱ

9. Back to Ruth. What stipulations must be satisfied for the kinsman to redeem the land? (v.5)

10. Why might Ruth have been considered an owner along with Naomi? (v.5) (See Ruth 1:2-5.)

11. What did the near-relative believe would be jeopardized by taking Ruth as a wife? (Also consider Genesis 38:7-9.)

“If he had a son by Ruth and that son were his only surviving heir, Mahlon’s property and part of his own estate would go to Elimelech’s family.”ⁱⁱ

12. The near-relative was interested in the field but not in the bride. (v.6) What grand opportunity may have been unknowingly forfeited by his unwillingness to obey the law of levirate marriage? (See Ruth 4:22.)

13. From whom would the Christ child descend? Read Genesis 49:10, Isaiah 9:7, and Micah 5:2. Also consider Luke 2:1-7 (Matthew 2:1).

14. How does Matthew 13:44 apply? Who was Ruth to Boaz?

15. Was the near-relative’s name remembered because he sought to preserve his life? How is he like Orpah? (Ruth 1:14-15) Think on Matthew 16:26.

Read Ruth 4:7-12.

16. Read Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Based on this passage, why might the author have elected not to disclose the name of the near-relative?

17. According to Genesis 13:17, Deuteronomy 11:24, and Joshua 1:3, what was the near-relative forfeiting by removing his sandal?

18. To redeem means to set free by paying a price. What did it cost Ruth? What did it cost Boaz? How is Christ represented in this transaction?

19. How did the Bethlehemites react to Boaz's declaration? What blessing did they proclaim over him? (v.11)

20. What is inferred by including Rachel and Leah's, and Tamar's names in their blessing?

What sort of impact would their words have had upon Ruth?

21. Describe all the ways in which Ruth's life was redeemed. Who was she now?

ⁱ Read also Deuteronomy 28:1-14.

ⁱⁱ Wiersbe, Warren. (2003). *The Bible Exposition Commentary: Old Testament History*. (p.199). Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications.