

RUTH 4:1-6 (TO PERPETUATE THE NAME OF ELIMELECH)

Introduction: What are some excuses for someone to fail to take a necessary action when it was within their ability to accomplish that action? Greed, fear, pride, stupidity, arrogance, superstition, and hatred are some reasons that come to mind immediately.

Within the past few years, the US president failed to act on and support a movement which was occurring in a terrorist nation, Iran. If that movement had taken root and prevailed, there may have been a new leadership and an easing of world tensions.

Also, they may have been more aligned with the common interests of the US and her allies. But for several of the abovementioned reasons, he failed to act. Since that time, the situation in the Middle East has spun out of control and the world is a far less stable place.

One of the most prevalent reasons for people to not act is superstition. There are people that live by the horoscope and won't do certain things if it gives a bad word. People are afraid of certain numbers. Thirteen is a common one. The number four is too.

In China, the number four has almost the same pronunciation as the word "death" and so nearly an entire nation is paralyzed by *tetraphobia*. They would rather not act on something necessary, than do it if the number four is somehow involved.

The list is long and it is complex, but it is real. Unlike some phobias which are not grounded in superstition, the ones that are become sinful because they fail to rely on God's overarching providence and attention.

Instead, they demonstrate a fear that He is not in control, and that acting - even if it is in accord with His will, is not our first priority. The prophets of Israel spoke of these things and told what the cure and remedy for them is...

Text Verse: And when they say to you, "Seek those who are mediums and wizards, who whisper and mutter," should not a people seek their God? *Should they seek* the dead on behalf of the living? ²⁰To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, *it is* because *there is* no light in them. Isaiah 8:19, 20

Instead of seeking answers in horoscopes or mediums, and instead of failing to act out of superstitious fears, we are told to seek the Lord. As Isaiah says, "To the law and to the testimony!" In order to seek the Lord and be in His will, we actually have to open His word, study it, and follow it's precepts.

Today, we will see someone superstitiously turn away from following the law of the Lord in order to protect his earthly inheritance. What a shame it is for him. He enters the pages of redemptive history and he fades from them as well without his name ever being mentioned... all because of superstition.

Instead of being obedient to the law and becoming a great name, he fades into the unknown obscurity of history. Let us not be found in such a sad state. Instead, let us follow the Lord, trust the Lord, and be obedient to His word above all else. The way to do these things is to know His word and so let's turn to that superior word once again and... May God speak to us through His word today and may His glorious name ever be praised.

I. At the Gate of Bethlehem (verses 1 & 2)

¹ Now Boaz went up to the gate

Now Boaz went up... In the previous chapter, we read this as spoken by Naomi -

"Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, *is he* not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. ³Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your *best* garment and go down to the threshing floor; *but* do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking."
Ruth 3:2, 3

Ruth went "down" to the threshing floor and Boaz now goes "up" to the gate. But elevation isn't always a consideration when going up or going down in the Bible. Rather, the importance of an area often indicates a higher position, regardless of elevation.

In the Bible, when one is going toward the land of Canaan, they are always said to go "up" regardless of elevation or direction on the compass. When one goes towards Jerusalem, they are always said to go "up" in the same way. The same is true when leaving either area. The Bible will then say the person is going down.

In Genesis 46, Joseph left the place where he was to go "up" to, Goshen, and then when he left Goshen to go back and speak to Pharaoh, he went "up" in the opposite direction. The first was "up" in direction towards Canaan because Goshen was on the way there. The second was up in legal elevation, toward the royal throne. And so it is going "up" in a courtly sense.

This might sound unimportant, but the words are intended to get us to think things through, not haphazardly skip over. Boaz went "up" to the gate because the gate is the place of judgment. Whether the threshing floor was actually lower than the gate isn't as important as that the gate is where the matter decided upon at the threshing floor would be adjudicated.

¹ (con't) **and sat down there;**

The gate and walls of ancient Middle Eastern cities were usually built out of stone and the gate normally had an arched entrance with deep recesses on each side. In these recesses, they built seating where people could relax, conduct business, guard if necessary, judge cases, and so on.

These recesses would be in the shade and catch any breezes coming through as well. On many other occasions throughout the Old Testament, the gates are noted as the place of judgment, commerce, and activity. The judges of the cities would spend their time there at the city gates.

Boaz set out to get to the gate early in order to make sure that he would be there before the person he intended to see would pass through on his way to work, probably in his own harvest field. If he missed him, then it might not be until the end of the day that he would have a chance to see him again as he passed through the gate to go home for the evening.

There in the city gate, the place of judgment, Boaz waited for the case to be presented and decided.

¹ (con't) **and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by.**

And behold! In Hebrew, *v'hinneh*. The thought is prefixed to this section of the verse to show that, sure enough, the man Boaz had hoped to see had come. The hand of God was ensuring that Boaz was up and at the gate early enough to be there when this most important moment would come to pass.

The "close relative" or *goel*, meaning the one who had the first right of redemption came by as anticipated. The matter would be settled today, just as Boaz had promised Ruth in the dark hours of the previous night at the threshing floor.

¹ (con't) **So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here."**

The very fact that Boaz was sitting at the gate was a plain enough declaration that he sought out the settlement of a judicial matter. The language used here was a form of judicial summons. The words are "Come aside, friend; sit down here."

In Hebrew, the word translated as "friend" is *peloni almoni*. They are words that have no true equivalent value in English but they are a way of addressing a definite person without stating his name. The Greek translation of this verse calls him "hidden one."

The words come from two other Hebrew words. The first is *palah* which means to identify, distinguish, or specify. The second is *alam*, which means to bind, or to be silent, or speechless. This then gives the twofold sense of *identifying* a person while *concealing* him at the same time.

The only other two times this phrase is used are in 1 Samuel 21:3 and 2 Kings 6:8. Both of those times it is referring to a known place which is not named. A good way of understanding this phrase would be to think of a mountain range full of caves. In one of the caves there is gold.

If someone wanted me and only me to know where the gold was, he'd take me and show me. If someone else asked me where I was working when I brought in a bag of gold, I would say, "in such and such a cave in the mountains." I have revealed, but I have also concealed. I'm working at the mountains and in a cave, but I ain't telling which or where...

In this statement, Boaz has revealed to the man that he has identified him, but concealed who he is in relation to the circumstances which he intends to relay. Hence, the man knows this is a judicial-type of summons.

Throughout the meeting, his name won't be given at all. As we will see, he will be concerned about preserving his own inheritance which includes his own name, and yet his name is lost to history, buried in the grave of unending oblivion. The irony is palpable.

However, at the same time as showing a mark of contempt for him, it is also somewhat a mark of grace. Because he will not fulfill the duty of the kinsman, according to the law he should rightfully be openly and publically disgraced. However, by concealing his name, the shame of the situation is in part hidden from us as well.

¹ (con't) So he came aside and sat down.

Knowing that he has been summoned for a legal matter, the *goel*, or the kinsman redeemer, came to his place at the court of adjudication and took his seat. Whatever the matter is, he shows no sense of fear by claiming urgent business elsewhere or by putting the matter off. He is, at this time, unaware of what will transpire.

² And he took ten men of the elders of the city,

There is nothing in the law to require this action here. The law merely states, even in the most severe matters, that two or three witnesses are all that is necessary to testify to a matter. As Paul states concerning such things even in the New Testament -

"By the mouth of two or three witnesses every word shall be established."

2 Corinthians 13:1

This builds on Jesus' words of Matthew 18:16 which repeats the same thought. The elders of the city were authorized to handle matters such as this one. Deuteronomy 25 deals specifically with this issue, but no set number of elders is given.

Because two or three witnesses is the only expected standard required for establishing a matter under the law, then there must be a reason why the Bible records Boaz' action of specifically calling *ten men* of the city to be witnesses.

In the first chapter, it said that Naomi and her family dwelt ten years in Moab. At that time, we looked at what the number ten signifies. Now we need to do so again. According to EW Bullinger in his book *Number in Scripture*, he shows that the number ten -

"...signifies *the perfection of Divine order*. It implies that nothing is wanting; that the number and order are perfect; that the whole cycle is complete."

The Bible is asking us to reflect on *what* is complete. What is the perfection of divine order that this account is picturing? What are these ten men picturing who are asked to sit and witness for or against the unnamed and yet known *goel*, the nearer kinsman? These are the questions that the Bible is asking us to consider.

² (con't) **and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.**

In agreement to the call of Boaz, these witnesses will be at hand during the presentation of the matter. In essence, they will testify to what occurs, witnessing for or against the interested parties as the matter is resolved. How will it be resolved is what is now to be determined.

*My inheritance O God is only You
Nothing more will my heart ever seek
For only You are faithful and true
You care for the lowly, the humble, and the meek*

*I know that my Redeemer lives!
And I know that in Him my hope is found
I trust the surety that His redemption gives
No other place of refuge can ever be found*

*In Christ alone will I hope and trust
To Him alone will I set my gaze
It is Jesus my Lord who is faithful and just
He is my sure hope now and for all my days*

II. I Will Redeem (verses 3 & 4)

³Then he said to the close relative,

It is Boaz who has called and it is Boaz who speaks first to present the matter at hand. If, as we have seen, Boaz pictures Christ, then who is this nearer relative, this one who has the first right of redemption? He is nearer to Naomi than Boaz, and so Boaz must defer to him first in order to ensure a proper legal position is maintained.

In God, there is no unrighteousness. In God, there must be a proper satisfaction of the law. There can be no skirting around an issue. Justice must be served because God is perfectly pure, holy, and righteous. Christ is our Redeemer, but

there must be an order and a propriety to how He redeems. This is evidenced by Boaz' proper handling of the matter which must be decided.

3 (con't) "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab,

It is a legal matter, it involves the *goel*, and it is now known to involve Naomi. Naomi has only been back in the land for a short time, a few months at most. She is a widow who has been gone for an extended period of time to a foreign country.

These are the facts presented to the unnamed individual thus far.

3 (con't) sold the piece of land which *belonged* to our brother Elimelech.

In these words, the tense is perfect. In other words, whether she has actually sold it, or whether she intends to sell it, in her mind it is as if already sold. This has occurred because she cannot maintain it herself. She is destitute and needs the money from the sale of the land in order to support herself.

The land is then noted to be that which "belonged to our brother Elimelech." If you remember what his name means, you might be able to see what is happening here. His name means either "God is King" or "God is My King." Either way, he is an Israelite and God is his king. He lived during the time of Israel's theocracy.

Boaz calls him "our brother" indicating that they are closely related to him and in a position to rectify whatever the situation required of them according to the law. In this, he never mentions Ruth even though Ruth is a participant in what is occurring as well.

Because Ruth married Naomi's son, she is entitled to take part in what has occurred, but because she is a gentile and this would involve a marriage to her, she is not named in the proceedings at this point. The matter at hand will first deal with Naomi and her inheritance which came from Elimelech to her. Once that proposition is settled, then the second matter could be addressed.

Some scholars, such as in the Cambridge Bible commentary, incorrectly argue that Naomi had no right to sell the property. Their words are that "this was not in accordance with Pentateuchal law, which says nothing about the inheritance of widows." In other words, the law of Moses gave Naomi no such right.

In Numbers 27, this, however, is written concerning such an inheritance -

"And you shall speak to the children of Israel, saying: 'If a man dies and has no son, then you shall cause his inheritance to pass to his daughter. ⁹ If he has no daughter, then you shall give his inheritance to his brothers. ¹⁰ If he has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to his father's brothers. ¹¹ And if his father has no brothers, then you shall give his inheritance to the relative closest to him in his family, and he shall possess it.'"

Numbers 27:8-11

These instructions were given to ensure that the property of the family remained within the family. Naomi *is* the closest relative and the inheritance is hers as long as she is alive. The issue of the *family name* is separate from the issue of the land although they are closely tied together as well. This will be seen as we continue.

⁴And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people.

The words, "I thought to inform you" are literally translated "I will uncover your ear." It is a way of saying that there is something previously unknown to his ear

which he will now reveal. The metaphor conveys the idea that he would move the hair of his head out of the way so that he would hear. In essence, "Hey, I have something to tell you that you probably didn't know."

What he will tell him is noted as "in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people." This might lead to the idea that there was a large gathering of the elders and the people at the gate, but the intent of the words is that the ten elders are representative of the people of the city, including all the elders and the inhabitants.

What is being done is to be open knowledge to all. There is nothing concealed in the matter and anyone who happens to be listening is representative of all who will come to know what has transpired. It is in essence, a matter which will be published for all to know about. There certainly may have been others assembled there, but his words go beyond them to all who lived in the town.

In his talk with Ruth of the previous night there on the threshing floor, Boaz' words to her were, "...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!"

However, instead of mentioning Ruth, he has only brought up the matter of the land. He is acting on behalf of the name of Elimelech first without apparent regard for the women. It is the piece of land which belonged to Elimelech which must first be addressed.

This doesn't mean that the other matters aren't just as important, but that each has its place. The nearer relative, the *goel*, should be aware of the law, but if he's not, all aspects of it will still be brought out in due time.

The individual laws within the Law of Moses were given to ensure the proper working of the society. They were there to safeguard property, family names, and

to make sure things were handled fairly. Adherence to the law was of paramount importance, just as it once was in America.

Without adhering to laws, there is only chaos and disorder. And so every detail of the law was carefully adhered to for the good of the people, all the people. In Leviticus 25, this is recorded -

"If one of your brethren becomes poor, and has sold *some* of his possession, and if his redeeming relative comes to redeem it, then he may redeem what his brother sold. ²⁶ Or if the man has no one to redeem it, but he himself becomes able to redeem it, ²⁷ then let him count the years since its sale, and restore the remainder to the man to whom he sold it, that he may return to his possession. ²⁸ But if he is not able to have *it* restored to himself, then what was sold shall remain in the hand of him who bought it until the Year of Jubilee; and in the Jubilee it shall be released, and he shall return to his possession." Leviticus 25:25-28

This is exactly what has come to pass in Naomi's case. She became poor and was determined to sell her property in order to live. If a close relative came to redeem it, they could do so. If Naomi later became wealthy and able to redeem it, she could do so.

If there was no redemption of it, then in the Year of Jubilee, which occurred every 50th year in Israel, it would be returned to the one who originally owned it, regardless of redemption. Naomi was poor, she possessed land which bore the name of Elimelech, and therefore, the law expected its redemption.

This expectation was now being directed to the unnamed *goel* whom Boaz was addressing. It is a piece of property from the widow of Elimelech. It must have looked like a good deal for him to increase his wealth in a rather simple way. And so Boaz continues with his words...

4 (con't) If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*;

The fact that Naomi's land can be redeemed proves that it is her right as the widow to possess and/or sell the land. Although she is childless and possibly too old to have more children, she carries within herself the embryonic or emergent right of the heir.

This is presupposed in Boaz' words, and within the law itself. The opportunity to redeem it is available and it has been presented to the nearest *goel*. The question is basically, "Are you willing to redeem the land of Naomi in this way. What do you say?"

4 (con't) but if you will not redeem *it*, then tell me, that I may know;

The Hebrew actually says, "but if **he** will not redeem it." Nobody translates it this way, but there is nothing to assume that this isn't the intended meaning. He is addressing not only the *goel*, but the elders. It is not only looking for *his* acceptance of the offer, but of *their* acknowledgment that his acceptance is either valid or invalid. In what this pictures, the term "**he**" perfectly fits what is occurring.

In essence, Boaz has insisted to know whether the one who is expected to meet the demands of the law will, in fact, meet those demands. He has a right to know and he wishes to know. The law must be adhered to and the demands of the law must be settled.

The expectation is the same as in any properly functioning society. There is one standard and all are obligated to work within that one standard. To not do so will inevitably lead to anarchy, chaos, and societal breakdown. The law must be met. Boaz will now let him know why he is advising him about the land...

4 (con't) **for *there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.***”

"Dear brother. You are closer to Elimelech than I and the law affords you this marvelous opportunity to meet the demands of the law if you can and if you will. I am, in the integrity of my words, and in accordance with that great, honorable, and noble law which has been given to us by God through the hand of Moses, giving you the opportunity to step forward and redeem. However, if you are unwilling or unable to do so, I have your back, dear brother. I am next after you."

4 (con't) **And he said, “I will redeem it.”**

"The matter is settled! It is good, dear brother, that you were willing to take action and redeem the inheritance of our departed brother Elimelech. What a fine example of Israelite values and integrity you are; that you have stepped forward and placed your foot on that wonderful inheritance. Claiming it as your own shows the caliber of man you are! And what nice sandals adorn your feet. Good job dear brother!"

*Redeem me from the oppression of man
That I may keep Your precepts, O God
I will follow You always and as best as I can
I will remember You with each step that I trod
Make Your face upon Your servant shine
And teach me Your statutes, this to You I pray
Then endless joy will certainly be mine
And eternally I will walk in Your light-filled way
Rivers of water run down from my eyes
Because men do not keep Your law
Instead they are filled with deceit and lies
When I looked around, this is what I saw*

III. I Cannot Redeem (verses 5 & 6)

⁵Then Boaz said,

Boaz responds... "There is more. A wee bit more. It's just a small thing really. But it is the law, and the law is the law. So good of you to be willing to fulfill every jot and tittle of the law. Let me tell you what the law also requires..."

^{5 (con't)} "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy *it* from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead,

Within the law is the concept of *entailment*. The Essential Law Dictionary defines entailment as "A restriction of the way a property will be inherited that is different from what the ordinary rules of inheritance would dictate."

The ordinary rules would apply if Elimelech's sons had lived. They would be the heirs. However, both died. Likewise, if neither daughter-in-law came from Moab, Naomi would be the sole owner. As she was probably beyond child-bearing years, the land would be sold to the nearest kinsman free from any other encumbrances.

But... Ruth. came. with. her. She attached herself and her future to Israel and the God of Israel in her remarkable words of chapter 1 -

"Entreat me not to leave you,
Or to turn back from following after you;
For wherever you go, I will go;
And wherever you lodge, I will lodge;
Your people *shall be* my people,
And your God, my God." Ruth 1:16

She therefore possessed all the rights of an Israelite and was thus the rightful heiress of her dead husband, Mahlon. Anyone who would redeem her inheritance would thus need to provide for the continuance of his name as prescribed by the law as Boaz continued to explain to the nearer *goel*...

⁵ (con't) **to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance.”**

This is what Ruth had desired and this is what Boaz promised to her. The issue of the land, though separate from the family name, is inextricably tied to the name because of her standing within the law itself. Because Orpah didn't come with her, the land which belonged to Elimelech and which partly was to belong to Chilion was transferred to the estate of Mahlon.

This is what entailment dictates and it is what the law mandates. The law was meticulously given to cover all possible contingencies that could arise. Ruth and her sad state, because of the death of Elimelech, Chilion, and Mahlon, was such a contingency which the law provided for.

The land belonged to Naomi but only Ruth was able to raise up the name of the dead through the bearing of a child. If the nearer *goel* determined to not marry Ruth in order to raise up a child in the name of dead, which is a requirement of the sale, then he would give up the other rights of the *goel* as well.

Because of Ruth, the two issues of land and name were indissolubly intertwined. The gracious nature of the law was intended to care for the name of the dead while also protecting the rights of the living. And believe it or not, all of these details form a greater picture which is found in redemptive history.

⁶ **And the close relative said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance.**

With only a few exceptions, scholars are in agreement that the *goel* claimed he could not redeem the land because it would involve increasing his expenses during his life to care for Ruth and probably Naomi. This then would involve unnecessarily dividing his inheritance with Ruth's firstborn who would bear the name of Malon's family line.

In essence, as Ellicott explains it, "It would, therefore, be like mortgaging one's own estate, and that for the benefit of another." However, this is not the case. It is an incorrect analysis of the situation. In Deuteronomy 25, the perpetuation of the name has nothing to do with the inheritance of land in the one raised up.

All it says is that... "...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" (verse 6). Nothing within the law required him to "ruin" his land or monetary inheritance. It merely required that he perform this one duty of having a child through the widow so that the name of his dead brother would live.

Rather than this faulty assumption, it is her *state as a Moabitess* which he is concerned about. This is why Boaz specifically brought up her nationality in the previous verse. Elimelech, Mahlon, and Chilion all died in Moab and he is concerned about the same happening to himself and his family.

It is a repetition of what occurred many generations earlier when Judah perceived exactly the same thing in his daughter Tamar -

"Then Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name *was* Tamar. ⁷ But Er, Judah's firstborn, was wicked in the sight of the LORD, and the LORD killed him. ⁸ And Judah said to Onan, 'Go in to your brother's wife and marry her, and raise up an heir to your brother.' ⁹ But Onan knew that the heir would not be his; and it came to pass, when he went in to his brother's wife, that he emitted on the ground, lest he should give an heir to his brother. ¹⁰ And the thing which he did displeased the LORD; therefore He killed him also. ¹¹ Then Judah said to Tamar his daughter-in-law, 'Remain a widow in your father's house till my son Shelah is

grown.' For he said, 'Lest he also die like his brothers.' And Tamar went and dwelt in her father's house." Genesis 38:6-11

This is the "ruin" he was concerned about. Instead of the grace found in the law, which included even this gentile convert, he was overwhelmed with superstition of what acquiring Ruth would might mean. However, Boaz was not. He understood that the law included the gentiles in the rejoicing of God's gracious provision.

As it says in the law itself in the Song of Moses, "Rejoice, O Gentiles, *with* His people." Paul uses that very verse and ascribes it to the work of Christ in Romans 15:10. And this leads to one of the reasons why Judah and Tamar are mentioned later in this chapter in a positive light.

^{6 (con't)} **You redeem my right of redemption for yourself,**

Boaz is granted the right of redemption and all that accompanies it. And thus, he is also granted Ruth the Moabitess as wife. The heavy, difficult beatings of his heart over the anxiety of the moment surely turned to heavy beatings of his heart over the joy and anticipation of securing the desire *of* that excited heart.

To him would come this beautiful friend, this lovely gentile, and this woman of virtue who had stolen his heart from the moment he saw her gleaning in the fields. Boaz has prevailed.

*6 (fin) **for I cannot redeem it.**"

Unfortunately, our verses today end not on a completely joyous note, but rather on a lie which is in itself a violation of the very law that the *goel* has so meticulously been presented. He had scrupulously followed the minute details of the law in order to shirk his responsibility to Ruth.

And yet he violated the law in the very process of clinging to its provisions. When he uttered the words *ki lo ikal ligol* - "for I am not able to redeem" he wasn't truthful. Rather, he could redeem, but he simply refused to do so. In his lie, he disqualified himself from the right of redemption. Obedience to the law is more than mechanical, but it involves a higher law, that of love.

And thus it is with each of us in most areas of life. We can; we simply don't. Those things that we should do and know are right to do, but which we don't do become a stumblingblock to us. Sins of omission are no less grievous than sins of commission.

And of all of the sins of omission that we could ever face, the greatest is to not receive God's gracious offer of Jesus. Often, it is a passive action, not an active one. We may not hate the thought of Jesus, we simply ignore what His life means to us. We love the world, we treat it as our inheritance, and we lose out on what is true life. As Matthew Henry states about this situation -

"...many are shy of the great redemption; they are not willing to espouse religion; they have heard well of it, and have nothing to say against it; they will give it their good word, but they are willing to part with it, and cannot be bound to it, for fear of marring their own inheritance in this world." Matthew Henry

What a terrible thought that is! We would give up the pleasures and the treasures of heaven for a short span of life pursuing *the wind*. Jesus asked what profit it is to a man if he gains the whole world and loses his soul?

The answer is "none." And yet it is the path that most take. Please, don't be found on that path, but instead take the path that leads to life, eternal life, in a restored relationship with God. If you've never made a commitment to Jesus Christ, it is the most important decision that you could ever make.

Without Him, there are only the prospects of eternal separation from God. With Him, there is life, eternal *life*.

Closing Verse: Therefore remember that you, once Gentiles in the flesh—who are called Uncircumcision by what is called the Circumcision made in the flesh by hands— ¹² that at that time you were without Christ, being aliens from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers from the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. ¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. Ephesians 2:11-14

Next Week: Ruth 4:7-12 (I Eschew This Shoe) (11th Ruth Sermon)

The Lord has you exactly where He wants you. He has a good plan and purpose for you. He knows your trials, troubles, and woes and He is there with you through them. So cling to Him and let Him do marvelous things for you and through you.

To Perpetuate the Name of Elimelech

Now Boaz up to the gate went

And there he sat down

And behold, the close relative, the gent

Of whom Boaz had spoken came by the gate of Bethlehem town

So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here."

So he came aside and sat down kind of near

And he took ten men there

Of the elders of the town

And said, "Sit down here."

And so they also sat down

Then he said to the close relative, there at hand
“Naomi, who has come back to Israel
From the country of Moab, sold the piece of land
Which belonged to our brother Elimelech who in death fell

And I thought to inform you, saying
‘Buy it back, for such is your right
In the presence of the inhabitants, I am praying
And the elders of my people, yes in their sight

If you will redeem it, redeem it
But if you will not redeem it, then tell me
That I may know, for I admit
There is no one but you to redeem it, as you can see

And I am next after you
And he said, “I will redeem it
This I will do

Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field
From the hand of Naomi, as you have said
You must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess
Yes, from the wife of the dead
That the name of the dead through his inheritance will be perpetuated
This is what the law requires, just as I have stated
And the close relative said

“I cannot for myself it redeem
Lest I ruin my own inheritance
This won't work out, it would seem

You redeem for yourself my right of redemption
For I cannot redeem it, I appeal to the law's exemption
In the requirements of the law there is no hope
No man can meet its demands perfectly
It reflects God's standards, far beyond the scope
Of our hopeless state, beyond all our ability

And yet for God all things are possible, we know
And so He stepped out of heaven's glory
And united with human flesh in order to bestow
The good news found in the gospel story
Yes, Christ took on the likeness of a man
And in this appearance to the cross He went
Being obedient to the law to fulfill the plan
From heaven to earth on this mission He was sent

He alone can redeem man who fell so long ago
In His grace and mercy, He came to dwell among us
Fulfilling the plan when to the cross He did go
All hail the Lamb of God, our precious Lord, Jesus

Hallelujah and Amen...