

CHAPTER 6

PAGAN RUTH

Every person has a need to belong. A person needs to be attached to certain things and to be a part of certain things. Think about yourself. Do you belong to a family? Do you belong to a church family? Do you belong to a country? Do you belong to a team or an organization or a club? Make a list of some of the things to which you belong:

The things that a person belongs to are the things that give meaning and purpose to a person's life. As we study the Book of Ruth, we will be thinking about **the problem of belonging**.

Ruth Chapter 1

When did the events in the book of Ruth take place (Ruth 1:1)? (circle the correct answer)

- (a) in the days of Moses
- (b) in the days of Joshua
- (c) in the days of the judges
- (d) in the days of the kings (such as David and Solomon).

Elimelech and his family were from the town of Bethlehem. Who were two people who would be born in Bethlehem at a later time and who would make this town very famous? See Luke 2:4 (the end of the verse) and Luke 2:11.

1. _____ 2. _____

Why did Elimelech and his family leave Bethlehem (Ruth 1:1)? _____
 What country did they go to (Ruth 1:2)? _____ Find this country on a map (many Bibles have maps in the back). This country is to the East of what great body of water?
 _____ It is also about a 50 mile
 journey from Bethlehem!

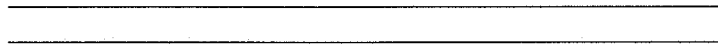
In verse 4 of chapter 1 we are introduced to Ruth. Was Ruth a Jewish woman? _____ Was she a Philistine woman like Delilah? _____ What was she? _____ She was a Gentile and she would also be considered as a heathen or a pagan (an unsaved person who

is from a nation which does not worship the God of the Bible). In fact, the Moabites were not welcome in the land of the Jews. They were to be excluded from the congregation of Israel (see Deut. 23:3-6).

Who died in the land of Moab (Ruth 1:3 and 1:5)?

After the famine was over, Naomi decided to return to her homeland (Ruth 1:6-7). She urged her two daughters-in-law to return to their families (Ruth 1:8). What decision did Orpah make (Ruth 1:14-15)? _____ She returned to her people and to her (false) gods. She returned to the dead religion and foolish idolatry of the Moabite people. What decision did Ruth make (Ruth 1:16-17)?

_____ She decided to be attached to her mother-in-law ("until death do us part"—Ruth 1:17). In making this life-changing decision, what were some of the things that Ruth was willing to change (Ruth 1:16-17)?



The Law of Saving a Brother's Name

This law is found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. To understand the Book of Ruth, you must understand this law. Read Deuteronomy 25:5. Did Ruth's husband die? _____ Did they have any children? _____ This law says that the dead husband's brother can marry the woman (his sister-in-law) and then the first born son would bear the name of the dead husband and would also receive that man's inheritance (Deut. 25:6). Did the brother have to marry this widow or could he refuse to marry her (Deut. 25:7-10)?

Did Ruth's dead husband have any living brothers who could marry her (Ruth 1:11-13)? _____ Even though there were no living brothers, a close relative of Elimelech (Naomi's husband) could also do this and in this way the name of Ruth's dead husband (Mahlon--see Ruth 4:10) would not become extinct.

Ruth Chapter 2

Naomi did have a close relative (**a kinsman**, a close relative of her husband) and what was his name (Ruth 2:1)? _____ Ruth went out to glean in the fields and she ended up in this man's field (Ruth 2:2). It may have seemed like a lucky happenstance (see the word "hap" in Ruth 2:3) that she ended up in this particular field, but when it comes to God, there are no accidents. God had it all planned so that the right woman came to the right field at the right time! God does all things well!

To "glean" means to gather grain left by the reapers. It was usually the poor who would glean and pick up the "left-overs." God made provision for this in His laws (see Leviticus 19:9-10; 23:22; Deuteronomy 24:19). The farmer was to leave grain in the corners of his field and also he was not to make a clean harvest of his field. He was to leave ample grain for the poor. This was God's "welfare system." The poor still had to go into the field and work hard at gathering the left-over grain, but it was there for them to take. This is different from today's welfare system, where often lazy people who are unwilling to work are rewarded with free hand-outs.

Irresponsibility should not be rewarded. See 2 Thessalonians 3:10--Those who are unwilling to work should not E_____.

Boaz showed Ruth great kindness (Ruth 2:8-9) and she responded with wonderment (Ruth 2:10): "Why have I found grace in your eyes? I'm nothing but a foreigner. I'm a Moabite woman who doesn't really belong. How can you be so good to me?" Ruth came to this land looking for GRACE and for the GOD OF GRACE and she found what she was looking for.

Boaz had heard of all that Ruth did for Naomi (Ruth 2:11). Remember, Naomi was old and had no husband or sons to take care of her. Ruth was willing to do all she could for her mother-in-law.

Boaz also realized that it cost something for Ruth to come to the land of the Jews. What are some of the things which Ruth had to **leave** (see Ruth 2:11)?

_____ Ruth had to leave everything belonging to her old life in order to gain everything belonging to her new life! In order to belong to something that is very important and very good, it is often necessary to leave something else.

Peter once said to Jesus, "We have left _____ and have followed thee" (Mark 10:28). What are some of the things which Peter left (see Mark 1:16-20)?

_____ Peter left many things but he also gained many things. Did he gain anything **now**, in this life (Mark 10:29-30)? _____ Did he gain anything **then**, in the next life (Mark 10:30)? _____

Think about Moses. What are some things that Moses left (Hebrews 11:24-27)?

_____ Did Moses gain anything? _____

Ruth left much, but she gained something very precious and very wonderful. Boaz understood this. He knew that God could give her what was far better than all that she left. See Ruth 2:12-- "**the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.**" Ruth had made the best decision she could make! She had decided to trust in the God of Israel! She had decided to take refuge under God's protective wings (see Psalm 91:4). As a hen gathers her young under her wings to protect them from harm, so God protects those who come to Him for safety. Does everyone want to be under God's protective wings (see Matthew 23:37)? _____ But Ruth did! She wanted to belong to the living God! The living God is always ready to receive those who will put their trust in Him!

Boaz continued to show kindness to Ruth (Ruth 2:14-17). Naomi was very pleased with the success that Ruth enjoyed (Ruth 2:18-20). Could Boaz be the right man for Ruth?

Ruth Chapter 3

Naomi wanted to seek R_____ for Ruth (Ruth 3:1), which is another way of saying that she wanted to seek to work out a marriage for her. She was hoping that Boaz would be willing to be the KINSMAN-REDEEMER (the relative of Ruth's first husband and the one who would fulfill the law found in Deuteronomy 25:5-10). More will be said about the KINSMAN-REDEEMER later.

Ruth did something to Boaz that might seem very strange to us. She quietly went to the place where Boaz was lying, uncovered his feet and lay down there (see Ruth 3:4,7). This might seem silly to us but Boaz knew what it meant. He could have kicked her out, but instead he placed a corner of his garment over Ruth as a sign that he would seek to marry her. Ruth was inviting Boaz to be a KINSMAN-REDEEMER (see Ruth 3:9) and he accepted the invitation (see Ruth 3:10-13).

Since coming to Bethlehem, Ruth had an excellent testimony among the people. What kind of a woman was she (Ruth 3:11)? _____ See also Proverbs 31:10 where the same word ("virtuous") is found. She was a woman who was strong in virtue and goodness and rightness. Her love and goodness to her mother-in-law was seen by all (Ruth 2:11). Was the whole city impressed by the testimony of this woman (Ruth 3:11)? _____

Boaz was a virtuous man also. Boaz did not want to do wrong. In fact, Boaz did not even want to do anything that appeared wrong. Boaz knew that people might not understand the presence of Ruth at the threshing floor and he wanted her to get away before this was known (Ruth 3:14). Boaz did no wrong and Boaz did not even want anyone to think that he had done wrong. Believers are to abstain from evil and we are also to abstain from "all (every) _____ of evil" (1 Thessalonians 5:22).

Boaz wanted to marry Ruth, but there was one problem. Boaz knew that there was one man who was even a closer relative to Ruth's first husband. In all fairness, this man should get first choice (Ruth 3:12-13). The last chapter of Ruth shows how this problem was worked out.

Ruth Chapter 4

The city gate is the place where important business was transacted (Ruth 4:1) and this is the place where Boaz took ten elders of the city to be witnesses (Ruth 4:2).

The man who was a closer relative than Boaz was given an opportunity to redeem the land and marry Ruth (Ruth 4:3-6). His answer is very interesting: "I C _____ REDEEM" (Ruth 4:6). This reminds us of THE LAW. The law cannot redeem a person! The law cannot bend and cannot compromise. The law can only put a man under a CURSE (Galatians 3:10,13) but only CHRIST can redeem a sinful man (Galatians 3:13). The law could only keep Ruth out (see Deuteronomy 23:3)! The law can only keep sinners out of heaven. The law can show a man how sinful he is (Romans 3:20), but the law cannot set a person free from sin. The law is like a mirror. A mirror can show a person how dirty his face is, but a mirror cannot clean his face! "For what the law _____ do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son...condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3). What the law could not do, GOD COULD!

After the kinsman refused to marry Ruth, Boaz was then free to marry her himself (Ruth 4:9-13). In a very special way God used Boaz to fulfill the very prayer which Boaz had prayed in Ruth 2:12. The Lord did bless and reward Ruth in a very meaningful way.

As we come to the end of chapter 4 we see that God's rich blessing was upon Ruth. According to Ruth 4:17, we learn that Ruth's first son was named OBED. According to this verse (Ruth 4:17), what was Ruth's relation to king David? _____ Ruth became a part of the great Messianic line. In a sense she was the mother of the Messiah because out of her would eventually come the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Can you find the name of Ruth in the great genealogy of the King found in Matthew chapter 1? Verse: _____

Pagan Ruth left everything in order to gain everything! Now she BELONGED! She belonged to a virtuous man. She belonged to a great nation. She belonged to the "royal line." And most of all she belonged to the one, true God--the LORD Himself!

**"Now I belong to Jesus; Jesus belongs to me!
Not for the years of time alone, but for eternity!"**

-Norman Clayton

The Problem of Belonging

Before a person is saved, to whom and to what does he belong? See John 8:44; Ephesians 2:1-3; 1 John 3:8,12 _____

When a person is saved, who do they belong to? See John 17:14,16; 1 John 3:1; Colossians 1:13 _____

We were all once very much like Ruth! We were far from God (see Ephesians 2:11-12). "But now in Christ Jesus ye who once were far off are made _____ (near) by the _____ of Christ" (Ephesians 2:13). Christ died so that He might "bring us to _____" (1 Peter 3:18), we who were once very far away from God!

A Contrast Between Ruth and the Sad Day in Which She Lived

RUTH	JUDGES
Spiritual light	Spiritual darkness
Purity	Immorality
Deciding for the One true God	Pursuing Idols who are no gods
Devotion	Disloyalty
Love	Lust
Peace	War
Kindness	Cruelty
Obedience brings blessing	Disobedience brings sorrow
Oasis of righteousness	Desert of rebellion
Faithfulness of a Gentile alien	Faithlessness of the "chosen people"

The Kinsman-Redeemer

As we read the book of Ruth, Boaz reminds us of our great Redeemer, the Lord Jesus Christ. Ruth reminds us of the believer. Here are some of the truths that we are reminded of:

(1)	<p>The Kinsman - Redeemer must be a blood relative.</p> <p>What did Christ partake of in order to redeem sinful men (Hebrews 2:14)? _____ Christ became a man and was made "like His B _____" (Hebrews 2:17). He became our near relative!</p>
(2)	<p>The Kinsman-Redeemer must have enough money to buy the land.</p> <p>Boaz was wealthy and was able to pay the price (Ruth 2:1). The Lord Jesus Christ was able to pay the great price of our redemption (1 Cor. 6:20) and He paid it with His own blood by laying down His own life (1 Peter 1:18-19). We belong to God for two reasons: because of CREATION (He made us) and because of REDEMPTION (He bought us)!</p>
(3)	<p>The Kinsman-Redeemer must be willing to redeem.</p> <p>Was Christ willing to redeem sinners (Luke 22:42; Hebrews 10:7)? _____</p>
(4)	<p>The Kinsman-Redeemer should have a love for the one he is to marry.</p> <p>Boaz loved Ruth. What about God's love (Romans 5:8)?</p>
(5)	<p>The Kinsman-Redeemer must be willing to marry.</p> <p>Boaz was willing to marry Ruth. Is the believer married to Christ (Romans 7:4)? _____</p>

A BELIEVING BELIEVER CAN **SHOW** AND CAN **SAY** THAT HE HAS BEEN REDEEMED BY GOD'S GRACE AND THAT HE NOW BELONGS TO GOD (Col. 1:12-14; Eph. 2:8-10; Psalm 107:2).

"Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it!"
