

Exegetical Notes for Ruth 4:1-12

KEY

Barber = *Ruth: An Exegetical Commentary* (Cyril J. Barber). Chicago: Moody Press, 1983.

BBC = *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: Old Testament*. Edited by John H. Walton, Victor H. Matthews and Mark W. Chavalas. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2000.

BKC = *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*. Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1985.

Block = Block, Daniel I., *Judges, Ruth in the New American Commentary, Vol 6*. Edited by E. Ray Clendenen. Nashville: B&H Publishing Group, 1999.

Bush = Bush, Frederick. *Ruth/Esther in the Word Biblical Commentary, Vol 9*. Edited by David H. Hubbard and Glenn W. Barker. Dallas: Word Books, 1996.

Campbell = Campbell, Edward F., *Ruth: A New Translation with Introduction, Notes, and Commentary in The Anchor Bible, Vol 7*. Edited by William Foxwell Albright and David Noel Freedman. Garden City, NY: Doubleday and Company, 1975.

Harrison = *Introduction to the Old Testament* (R.K. Harrison). Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1969.

K&D = Keil, C.F. and Delitzsch, F. in the *Keil and Delitzsch Commentary on the Old Testament, Vol 2*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1989.

Leggett = *The Levirate And Goel Institutions In The Old Testament With Special Attention to the Book of Ruth* (Donald A. Leggett) Cherry Hill, NJ: Mack Publishing Company, 1974. PDF digitized with permission by Ted Hildebrandt, Gordon College, 2006.

MBC = MacArthur, John. *The MacArthur Bible Commentary*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2005.

PC = *The Pulpit Commentary: Ruth*. (H. D. M. Spence-Jones, Ed.). London; New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1909.

Piper = *A Sweet and Bitter Providence* (John Piper). Wheaton: Crossway, 2010.

TWOT = *The Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (R. Laird Harris; Gleason L. Archer, Jr.; Bruce Waltke). Chicago: Moody Press, 1980. Two Volumes.

UBS = *A Translator's Handbook on the Book of Ruth* (2nd ed.) (Waard, J. d., & Nida, E. A.). New York: United Bible Societies, 1991.

Wood = *Distressing Days of the Judges* (Leon Wood). Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1975.

Wiersbe = *Be Committed. "Be" Commentary Series* (Wiersbe, W. W. Wheaton, IL: Victor Books, 1993).

Three Steps of Exegesis

1. **Translation.** Work through a transliteration of the text and translate the passage directly, if possible.
2. **Exegesis.** Detailed exegesis of the passage by way of a "shot-gun" approach, using various exegetical tools.
 - >Work from critical commentaries to practical.
 - >Word studies and cross-references (analogy of the faith).
 - >Applicational analysis - applicational issues arising from the text.
 - >Theological analysis - theological issues arising from the text.

 - >Smooth away all of the wrinkles.
 - >The process is to yield an accurate "statue" as I chisel away the debris.
3. **Structural Analysis.** Diagram the passage developing a detailed outline and central proposition.

Basic English Diagram

1 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke, was passing by. So he said, "Turn aside friend sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

2 And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.

3 Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, (who has come back from the land of Moab) has to sell the piece of land which belonged to (our brother) Elimelech. (So I thought to inform you, (saying) 'Buy it before those who are sitting here, (and) before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.'")

4 And he said, "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, (the widow of the deceased), in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."

5 And the closest relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, ==> for I cannot redeem it."

6 [[Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel.]]

7 So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." And he removed his sandal.

8 Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today

9

that I have bought
from the hand of Naomi
all that belonged
to Elimelech
and all that belonged
to Chilion and Mahlon.

10 “Moreover,
I have acquired Ruth
the Moabitess,
the widow of Mahlon,
to be my wife
in order to
raise up the name of the deceased
on his inheritance,
so that
the name of the deceased
may not be cut off from his brothers
or from the court of his birth place;
you are witnesses today.”

11 And all the people who were in the court,
and the elders,
said,
“We are witnesses.
May the LORD make the woman
who is coming into your home
like Rachel and Leah,
both of whom built the house of Israel;
and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah
and become famous in Bethléhem.

12 “Moreover,
may your house
be like the house of Perez,
whom Tamar bore to Judah,
through the offspring
which the LORD shall give you
by this young woman.”

TRANSLATION, OUTLINE AND CENTRAL PROPOSITION

HEBREW TEXT (BHS):

- 1 ובעז עֲלֶה הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם וְהָיָה הַגָּאֵל עֹבֵר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר-בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה
שָׁבָה-פֹּה פְּלִנִּי אֶלְמִנִי וַיִּסֹּר וַיֵּשֶׁב:
- 2 וַיִּקַּח עֲשָׂרָה אֲנָשִׁים מִזִּקְנֵי הָעִיר וַיֹּאמֶר לְשׁוּבוּ-פֹה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ:
- 3 וַיֹּאמֶר לַגָּאֵל חֲלֹקֶת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר לְאַחֵינוּ לְאַלְיִמְלֹךְ מְכָרָה נַעֲמִי הַשָּׁבָה
מִשָּׂדֶה מוֹאֵב:
- 4 וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֲגִלָּה אֲזַנְּךָ לְאֹמֶר קִנְיָה נִגְדַּד הַיִּשְׁבִּים וְנִגְדַּד זִקְנֵי עַמִּי אִם-תִּגָּאֵל
גָּאֵל וְאִם-לֹא יִגָּאֵל הַגִּידָה לִּי וְאִדְעָה כִּי אֵין זֹלָתְךָ לַגָּאוֹל וְאֲנֹכִי אֶחְרִיךָ וַיֹּאמֶר
אֲנֹכִי אֲגָאֵל:
- 5 וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז בְּיוֹם-קִנּוּתְךָ הַשָּׂדֶה מִיַּד נַעֲמִי וּמֵאֵת רוּת הַמּוֹאֲבִיָּה אִשְׁת־הַיָּמָת
קִנִּיתָה לְהַקִּים שֵׁם-הַיָּמָת עַל-נַחֲלָתוֹ:
- 6 וַיֹּאמֶר הַגָּאֵל לֹא אוֹכַל לַגָּאֵל-לִי פֶן-אֲשַׁחֲיִת אֶת-נַחֲלָתִי גָאֵל-לְךָ אַתָּה
אֶת-גָּאֲלָתִי כִּי לֹא-אוֹכַל לַגָּאֵל:
- 7 וְזֹאת לְפָנַיִם בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל-הַגָּאוּלָּה וְעַל-הַתְּמוּרָה לְקַיֵּם כָּל-דִּבְרֵי שְׁלֹף אִישׁ
בְּעָלוֹ וְנָתַן לְרַעְהוּ וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:
- 8 וַיֹּאמֶר הַגָּאֵל לְבֵעַז קִנְיָה-לְךָ וַיִּשְׁלַף בְּעָלוֹ:
- 9 וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז לְזִקְנָיִם וְכָל-הָעָם יַעֲדִים אִתָּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קִנִּיתִי אֶת-כָּל-אֲשֶׁר
לְאַלְיִמְלֹךְ וְאֵת כָּל-אֲשֶׁר לְכַלְיֹן וּמַחֲלוֹן מִיַּד נַעֲמִי:

10 וגם את־רות המאבֵּיהָ אֵשֶׁת מַחְלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהַקִּים שְׁמ־הַמֵּת
עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שְׁמ־הַמֵּת מֵעַם אָחִיו וּמִשְׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ יַעֲדִים אִתָּם הַיּוֹם:

11 וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בְּשַׁעַר וְהַזְּקֵנִים יַעֲדִים יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה
אֶל־בֵּיתָךְ כְּרַחֵל וּכְלֵאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׁתֵּיהֶם אֶת־בֵּית יִשְׂרָאֵל וַעֲשֵׂה־חַיִּל
בְּאַפְרָתָה וּקְרָא־שֵׁם בְּבֵית לָהֶם:

12 וַיְהִי בַיּוֹם כִּבְּיַתָּה פָּרַץ אֲשֶׁר־יִלְדָה תָמָר לַיהוּדָה מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֵּן יְהוָה לָךְ
מִן־הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת:

ENGLISH TRANSLATION (NASB):

¹ Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.² And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down.³ Then he said to the closest relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech."⁴ "So I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy *it* before those who are sitting *here*, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem *it*, and I am after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem *it*."⁵ Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance."⁶ And the closest relative said, "I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem *it* for yourself; you *may have* my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem *it*."⁷ Now this was *the custom* in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of *land* to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the *manner of attestation* in Israel.⁸ So the closest relative said to Boaz, "Buy *it* for yourself." And he removed his sandal.⁹ Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon."¹⁰ "Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased may not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his *birth* place; you are witnesses today."¹¹ And all the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, "*We are* witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem."¹² "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD shall give you by this young woman."

PASSAGE / BOOK OUTLINE:

I. Act One: The Royal Line with Hope in Ruin (1:1-22)

- A. Scene One: Retreat from Bethlehem (vv. 1-2)
- B. Scene Two: Ruin in Moab (vv. 3-5)
- C. Scene Three: Returning to Bethlehem (vv. 6-22)

II. Act Two: The Royal Line with Hope Renewed (2:1-23)

- A. Scene One: Ruth Reaping (vv. 1-7)
- B. Scene Two: Ruth Rewarded - Part 1 (vv. 8-13)
- C. Scene Three: Ruth Rewarded - Part 2 (vv. 14-17)
- D. Scene Four: Ruth Reports (vv. 18-23)

III. Act Three: The Royal Line with Hope at Risk (3:1-18)

- A. Scene One: Remedy Proposed (vv. 1-5)
- B. Scene Two: Reception or Rejection (vv. 6-15)
- C. Scene Three: Resting in Providence (vv. 16-18)

IV. Act Four: The Royal Line with Hope Restored (4:1-17)

- A. Scene One: Resolving Legal Matters (vv. 1-12)
- B. Scene Two: Romance and Redemption (vv. 13-17)

Epilogue - Royal Rights and The Resultant Redeemer (4:18-22)

SERMON OUTLINE:

IV. Act Four: The Royal Line with Hope Restored (4:1-17)

A. Scene One: Resolving Legal Matters (vv. 1-12) (Trusting God in Doing Right)

1. Trusting in a Sovereign Loving God Who Controls the Hearts of Men

- a. God is Glorified When We Follow Through and Follow the Rules (1-2)
- b. God is Glorified When We Are People of Integrity (3-4)
- c. God is Glorified When We Are People of Wisdom (5)
- d. God is Glorified When We Trust Him Regardless of the Consequences (6-8)
- e. God is Glorified When We Say What We Mean and Mean What We Say (9-10)
- f. God is Glorified When Others See and Praise Him (11-12)

B. Scene Two: Romance and Redemption (vv. 13-17)

1. God is Glorified in Working All Things According to His Will
a The Picture Is Bigger Than a Postage Stamp!

Epilogue - Royal Rights and The Resultant Redeemer (4:18-22)

PASSAGE SUBJECT/THEME (what's t/passage talking about): Boaz demonstrates his integrity to God's Law . . .

PASSAGE COMPLEMENT/THRUST (what's t/passage saying about what it's talking about):
. . . by bringing the matter of Ruth's redemption before the nearer go'el and the town elders.

PASSAGE MAIN IDEA (central proposition of the text): Trusting in a Sovereign Loving God Who Controls the Hearts of Men (even in legal matters)

CENTRAL PROPOSITION OF THE SERMON: Trusting in a Sovereign Loving God Who Controls the Hearts of Men (even in legal matters)

SERMONIC IDEA/TITLE: Truth and Consequences

HISTORICAL/CULTURAL/GRAMMATICAL CONTEXT

Act 4 consists of three sections: 2 scenes (vv. 1-12; 13-17) and an epilogue (4:18-22). The second scene is notably parallel to 1:19-22.

Ruth 1:19–22	Ruth 4:13–17
<p>19 So they both went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came about when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was stirred because of them, <u>and the women said</u>, “<u>Is this Naomi?</u>”²⁰ <u>And she said to them</u>, “<u>Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.</u>”²¹ “<u>I went out full, but the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has witnessed against me and the Almighty has afflicted me?</u>”²² So Naomi returned, and with her Ruth the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, who returned from the land of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.</p>	<p>13 So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife, and he went in to her. And the LORD enabled her to conceive, and she gave birth to a son.¹⁴ <u>Then the women said to Naomi</u>, “<u>Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may his name become famous in Israel.</u>”¹⁵ “<u>May he also be to you a restorer of life and a sustainer of your old age; for your daughter-in-law, who loves you and is better to you than seven sons, has given birth to him.</u>”¹⁶ Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her lap, and became his nurse.¹⁷ And the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, “<u>A son has been born to Naomi!</u>” So they named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.</p>

In vv. 1-12 we have:

1. Boaz convenes the legal assembly of the elders at the gate - vv. 1-2
2. Boaz negotiates with the nearer goel - vv. 3-8
3. Boaz is blessed by the legal assembly of the elders who ratify the agreement - vv. 9-12

4:1 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וּבֵעֵז עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם וַהֲיָה הַגֹּאֵל עֹבֵר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר-בְּעֵז וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה
turn aside and he said Boaz spoke of whom was passing by the goel and behold there and he sat to the gate had gone up and Boaz
שָׁבָה-פֹּה פְּלֹנִי אֶלְמִנִי וַיִּסֹּר וַיֵּשֶׁב:
and sat and he turned aside --- friend sit here

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, “Turn aside, friend, sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there,

וּבֵעֵז עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם

Cf. 3:13, 15, 18.

The chronology is ambiguous. Boaz didn't delay (3:13 - in the morning) but we ought to refrain from nailing down specifics beyond that (i.e. translators who would render this phrase, "In the meantime, Boaz went up" or "Boaz had gone up"). Cf. Bush 196.

The verb employed in the phrase Boaz went is in the perfect tense in Hebrew, and this would indicate that the action described in this verse is not necessarily consecutive or following what has been mentioned at the end of chapter 3. Naomi's reply to Ruth, however, would seem to indicate that this is the next action, since she assures Ruth that "Boaz will settle the matter today." Nevertheless, the action described in verse 1 could have taken place earlier, at the same time, or later than the last events mentioned in chapter 3.* In some languages some marker of sequence of action is almost always required. A rendering such as "meanwhile" (Smith-Goodspeed) would seem to be too explicit. NEB has "now Boaz had gone," which would seem to place the action prior to what was recorded at the end of chapter 3. In some languages one is almost required to employ some such expression as "and then," which does not necessarily mark consecutive action but indicates that this is the next event being related in the story. [UBS]

The threshing floor was below the level of the city itself, and for that reason Boaz went “up” to the gate. The area was quite hilly. [BKC]

The gate to the town was where the activity was. It was a place of business, a place where t/men gathered, and where legal matters were adjudicated. Where the elders would frequent. This would specifically be the space immediately inside the town gate which was essential to the social life of the town. It was here that judgments were normally held (Deut 21:19; 25:7).

Archaeological excavations of village gate areas have uncovered benches where people would sit and meet.

This was where, in the morning, t/men would all pass on their way to work in the fields or conduct their business. Logical place and time where you would stand and watch for someone to pass by that you were looking for.

Beth. no larger a few hundred.

Cf. my notes from 3:11 ==>

Something very insightful in what he says that you are bound to miss in your English translations.
i. In the original Hebrew text "all my people in the city" is lit. "all the gate of my people"

Similar expression occurs 3 times in chap. 4

. . . all the gate of my people know that you are a woman of excellence.

What's t/signif? What do we see in chapt. 4? Legal proceedings.

In ancient Israel t/legal center of a town or city was found at t/gateway of his town. The gate was were men hung out. Barbershop.

Gate was often where legal proceedings were carried out ==>

Deuteronomy 21:18–21 18 “If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son who will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them,19 then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his home town.”

Deut 25 refers to t/gate being t/place where t/elders would be found.

Note the marker of "sitting" that indicates official business (twice in v. 1; once each in v. 2 & 3).

and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by

וְהִנֵּה הַגָּאֵל עֹבֵר אֲשֶׁר דִּבֶּר-בְּעֵז

"Behold" = Another example of God's providence.

פְּלִנִי אֶלְמִנִי

= "so and so" - an example of a Heb. word play known as "farrago" (a confused mixture; jumble). In such a figure, the words often rhyme, and are often without meaning outside of the expression. (Eg. "Hodge-podge").

In the two other places in the Old Testament where this expression occurs (1 Sam 21:2; 2 Kgs 6:8) - the name is omitted deliberately

So he said, "Turn aside, friend, sit down here." And he turned aside and sat down.

4:2 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיִּקַּח עֶשְׂרֵה אַנְשֵׁים מִזְקְנֵי הָעִיר וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁבוּ־פֹה וַיֵּשְׁבוּ:
and they sat sit here and he said of the town from the elders men ten and he took

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down.

“Elders” goes back to v. 1. 10 men = a minion.

Certain problems are involved in translating the verb *got*, which represents in Hebrew a verb often translated as “took.” One should not imagine that Boaz had to go through the town in order to find or select ten of the town’s elders; what he no doubt did was to ask ten of the town’s elders to stop as they were going in or out of the town gate. In many languages an appropriate translation would be “and Boaz caused ten of the town elders to stop” or “Boaz asked ten of the town elders to remain.” It is also possible to use an expression such as “selected” or “picked out” (cf. NAB), but this might imply too formal an activity. [USB]

Bush suggests that they were sent for. The people, including the elders of which there would have been many, would have passed through the gate in the morning on their way to work in the fields. Bush adds that there existed a “legal assembly” that included the elders and other men of age who owned property. [Bush, 198]

The leaders mentioned in this context would have been the heads of leading families, who formed the aristocracy of the town. As local authorities they were largely responsible for legal matters (see Deut 25:7; 1 Kgs 21:8–14).* There would certainly have been more than ten elders in Bethlehem, though the exact number is not known. A town such as Sukkoth had seventy-seven elders, according to Judges 8:14. In finding an appropriate term for “elders,” it is important not to use a word which merely means “older men,” though in many societies the older men are the leaders of the town. A more natural expression in many languages is “ten important men in the town,” “ten of the leaders in the town,” or “ten of the men in the town to whom people showed respect.” [UBS]

Note “sit down”.

4:3 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר לְגֵאֵל חֵלְקֵת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר לְאַחֵינוּ לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ מְכָרָה נָעֲמִי הַשָּׂבָה מִשָּׂדֶה
from the country of the one returning Naomi she is selling Elimelech for was for our brother which the land the tract of land to the goel and he said
מוֹאָב:
Moab

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then he said to the closest relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then he said to the closest relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech.

Significant questions and issues –

“Didn't Naomi know about this nearer relative?” She must have. He was a relative of Elimelech. He lived in Beth.

Why didn't she just go to him on her own? No way to know for sure. Might have been because t/nearer go'el was married. Maybe she knew something about him we're not told – not a man of integrity. Maybe she saw how God had led R. into t/portion of t/field belonging to B. and she saw that as a sign of God's providential working.

What about this field? That's a new development in the story.

How is it that Naomi has the rights to her husband's land? Law codes of t/OT don't seem to indicate that a widow could inherit her husband's property after his death. True generally. 2 OT passages (other than this one) that address t/issue: Dt. 21/Nu. 27.

The normal practice was that when a man died, his sons would inherit his estate so that it would remain within the family (Deut 21:15-17). If t/man had no sons, then his daughters would inherit (Num 27:7-8). But – in order to keep t/inheritance w/i t/family they had to marry w/i the tribe of their father (Num 36:6)

How did Naomi come to possess land? After her husband died lawful possession would have gone to her 2 sons. Neither M. or Chi. had children, so after they died Naomi gained control. This land wasn't in M. it was in Beth. For 10 years it lie dormant. Legally it would have reverted to t/nearest relative of Elimelech. IOW – he had right of redemption. But he had no way of knowing about it.

Naomi (and Ruth; cf. v. 5) had a field for sale that belonged to Naomi's late husband. No information is given as to how she came to possess it. Her poverty apparently required that she sell it. But if possible the land should remain in the family (cf. Jer. 32:6-12). [BKC]

It may be that a widow was permitted to retain t/land so long as she was living. IOW – N. had t/rights to it as long as she lived. She could use it, farm it, perhaps even lease it to another – But she could not sell it to anyone outside of t/family if E.

Why does Boaz bring up the land at this point but not Ruth? Strategic reason. See below.

Putting “belonged” in the past tense is misleading. The field would still belong to the family (family solidarity and property were significant).

Exegetical issue related to the question of why Naomi “has to sell the piece of land . . .” מְכַרָּהּ = “she is selling.” Bush cites 3 interrelated questions.

1. The meaning of מְכַרָּהּ. The word often means “sell” as in our English idea of a financial business transaction (Neh. 10:32, 13:20; Deut. 14:21; Prov. 31:24). In contexts where land is in view the word doesn't refer to the outright sale, but can refer to the usufruct use of the land for a certain amount of time at an agreed upon price (Lev. 25:14-16). This was common in antiquity as land ownership was often vested in a clan, not in an individual. “[I]n this type of land a family's ancestral heritage was inalienable; i.e. it could not be sold permanently (Lev 25:23; cf. 1 Kings 2:3). . . . Given such an agrarian-oriented land tenure, only the usufruct of the land was 'sold.' Further, such a transfer of usufruct was subject either to the right of 'pre-emption' by a relative (e.g. Jer 32:6-10) or to the right of 'redemption,' i.e., repurchase by a relative or the owner himself (Lev 25:24-27), or else it reverted to the owner in the Jubilee year (Lev 25:28) . . .” [Bush 201]

Bush sees such a usufruct in view here, in keeping with the idea of redemption below.

Wikipedia has the following information under the heading of “Usufruct:”

Usufruct is a right of enjoyment, enabling a holder to derive profit or benefit from property that either is titled to another person or which is held in common ownership, as long as the property is not damaged or destroyed. In many usufructory property systems, such as the traditional ejido system in Mexico, individuals or groups may only acquire the usufruct of the property, not legal title.

Usufruct comes from civil law, under which it is a subordinate real right (or in rem right) (ius in re aliena) of limited duration, usually for a person's lifetime. The holder of a usufruct, known as a usufructuary, has the right to use (usus) the property and enjoy its fruits (fructus).

Under Roman law, usufruct was a type of personal servitude (servitutes personarum), a beneficial right in another's property. The usufructuary never had possession of this property (on the basis that if he possessed at all, he did so through the owner), but he did have an interest in the property itself for a period, either a term of years, or a lifetime. Unlike the owner, the usufructuary did not have a right of alienation (abusus), but he could sell or lease his usufructory interest. Even though a usufructuary did not have possessory title, he could sue for relief in the form of a modified possessory interdict (prohibiting order).

Fruits refers to any renewable commodity on the property, including (among others) actual fruits,

livestock and even rental payments derived from the property. These may be divided into civil (fructus civiles), industrial (fructus industriales), and natural fruits (fructus naturales), the latter of which, in Roman law, included slaves and livestock.

In tribal cultures, usufruct means the land is owned in common by the tribe, but families and individuals have the right to use certain plots of land. Most Indian tribes owned things like land as a group, and not as individuals. The family never owned the land, they just farmed it. This is called usufruct land ownership. A person must make (more or less) continuous use of the item, or else he loses ownership rights. This is usually referred to as "possession property" or "usufruct". Thus, in this usufruct system, absentee ownership is illegitimate.

The oldest examples of usufruct are found in the Code of Hammurabi and the Law of Moses. The Law of Moses directed property owners not to harvest the edges of their fields, and reserved the gleanings for the poor.

France

In France usufruct applies in inheritances. Under French law an indefeasible portion known as the forced estate passes to the deceased's issue (with shares apportioned according to the number of children), with the rest of the estate - the free estate - free to dispose of by will. However, the surviving spouse may elect to distribute the forced estate as is, or convert it into a usufruct, or break up the estate into a distributable portion and a usufruct good for the children's lifetime. If a usufruct is chosen, a value is set for the usufruct interest for inheritance tax purposes and payable by the surviving spouse, on a sliding scale according to his/her age. The value of furniture and household items is calculated using a standard formula based on the appraised value of the estate's liquid and non-liquid assets, then the usufruct's value to the surviving spouse is subtracted, and finally the remaining balance is divided among the children on the death of the surviving spouse. This simplifies handling household items since the surviving spouse is free to maintain, replace or dispose of them as he/she wishes during his/her lifetime, with the monetary value of the items going to the children. Title to assets does not pass, and the usufruct disappears on death or at the end of a term of years. A usufruct is distinct from a trust or similar settlement. French law breaks with Roman law by construing a usufruct as not a servitude but rather a possessory interest.

Louisiana (USA)

Although the United States is for the most part a common law jurisdiction not recognizing usufruct, Louisiana is a civil-law jurisdiction, specifically following the French and Spanish models. In Louisiana, usufructs generally are created in a manner similar to other real rights, by gift ("donation"), will ("testament"), or operation of law. They typically operate as life estates. Unless otherwise provided in a will, a person's share of community property accedes to descendants as bare title holders ("naked owners"), however if that person has a living spouse, the latter will receive a usufruct in that portion of the estate until death or remarriage (Civil Code Art. 890). Under certain other conditions a usufruct may arise giving rights to that person's parents (Civil Code Art. 891).

I am curious if the idea of "lease" or "time share" is relevant?

This isn't "has to sell" as in "must sell" but "has to sell" in "has available to sell." the question is, how is it that Naomi has the rights to her husband's land? The legal codes of the OT do not indicate that a widow could inherit her husband's property.

The answer is in the vagueness of the Law. Only Deut. 21 and Num. 27 address the issue and they deal

with specific cases. "Further information on inheritance from OT narratives (such as Ruth 4) is difficult to interpret since such materials give such limited data that they are almost invariably open to more than one interpretation . . ." [Bush, 203]

The normal practice was that sons would inherit (Deut 21:15-17). If there are no sons, then the daughters (Num 27:7-8), but they were limited in marrying within their own clan (Num 36:6). If a man died with no children, the order would be: brother, uncles, nearest relative.

It seems that women were not normally heirs to their husband's estate.

Scholars then have assumed that Naomi must have been the original holder of the land, either coming from her father and held in trust by Elimelech, or as part of a dowry. Some have also suggested that Elimelech may have specifically willed or trusted Naomi part or all of his estate (perhaps while in Moab). However, these contra the direct statements made by Boaz in 4:3,9. The property is Elimelech's (and Mahlon/Chilion).

Consequently, the majority of scholars have proposed that Naomi must have inherited rights to the field of Elimelech. For example, Rowley concludes 'that she had a title to an unspecified amount of property is quite clear' ('Marriage of Ruth,' 184; cf. The remarks of Hubbard, 54-55). Some such right seems suggested by Prov. 15:25, 'He [Yahweh] keeps the widow's boundaries intact.' However, proprietary rights to land in the OT were vested in the clan, while the individual held only the right of possession and usufruct, and the central concern of the OT system of inheritance was that ownership of property should remain with the clan to which it originally belonged (see above). Hence, one must conclude with Lipinski that the widow held only usufructuary rights to her husband's property and that she did so only until she married again or died in her turn, at which time such rights reverted to her husband's clan in the normal order of inheritance. . . . Granted that the rights Naomi would have inherited are understood in this manner, one must surely allow that the author of Ruth assumes that his readers will not regard it as strange that a widow without sons or daughters would inherit her husband's property—at least in the sense of the usufructuary rights and possession and the right to transfer or assign the same within the clan" [Bush, 204]

Here so many ambiguities, uncertainties, and unknowns confront us that any final solution to the problems involved will doubtless permanently escape us. Nevertheless, in spite of these difficulties and uncertainties, I shall adopt as my working hypothesis the view that most of these uncertainties arise from our lack of knowledge of the socio-legal customs and institutions that regulated such real estate transactions and family obligations in ancient Israel rather than from our narrator's ignorance, ineptitude, or deliberate (albeit "artful") manipulation of legal principles and formulations for the purpose of constructing a "good" story (contra Levine, "Legal Themes," 96). The narrator has thus far shown himself to be such a skillful and well-informed storyteller that the only reasonable working hypothesis is the assumption that he and his ancient readers shared sufficient knowledge of the social and legal customs and obligations to comprehend what was going on. [Bush, 211]

Keil and Delitzsch:

"So far as the fact itself was concerned, the field, which Naomi had sold from want, was the

hereditary property of her deceased husband, and ought therefore to descend to her sons according to the standing rule of right; and in this respect, therefore, it was Ruth's property quite as much as Naomi's. From the negotiation between Boaz and the nearer redeemer, it is very evident that Naomi had sold the field which was the hereditary property of her husband, and was lawfully entitled to sell it. But as landed property did not descend to wives according to the Israelitish law, but only to children, and when there were no children, to the nearest relatives of the husband (Num. xxvii. 8-11), when Elimelech died his field properly descended to his sons; and when they died without children, it ought to have passed to his nearest relations. Hence the question arises, what right had Naomi to sell her husband's field as her own property? The Rabbins suppose that the field had been presented to Naomi and Ruth by their husbands (vid. Selden, de success, in bona def. c. 15). But Elimelech could not lawfully give his hereditary property to his wife, as he left sons behind him when he died, and they were the lawful heirs; and Mahlon also had no more right than his father to make such a gift. There is still less foundation for the opinion that Naomi was an heiress, since even if this were the case, it would be altogether inapplicable to the present affair, where the property in question was not a field which Naomi had inherited from her father, but the field of Elimelech and his sons. The true explanation is no doubt the following: The law relating to the inheritance of the landed property of Israelites who died childless did not determine the time when such a possession should pass to the relatives of the deceased, whether immediately after the death of the owner, or not till after the death of the widow who was left behind (vid. Num. xxvii. 9 sqq.). No doubt the latter was the rule established by custom, so that the widow remained in possession of the property as long as she lived; and for that length of time she had the right to sell the property in case of need, since the sale of a field was not an actual sale of the field itself, but simply of the yearly produce until the year of jubilee. Consequently the field of the deceased Elimelech would, strictly speaking, have belonged to his sons, and after their death to Mahlon's widow, since Chilion's widow had remained behind in her own country Moab. But as Elimelech had not only emigrated with his wife and children and died abroad, but his sons had also been with him in the foreign land, and had married and died there, the landed property of their father had not descended to them, but had remained the property of Naomi, Elimelech's widow, in which Ruth, as the widow of the deceased Mahlon, also had a share. Now, in case a widow sold the field of her deceased husband for the time that it was in her possession, on account of poverty, and a relation of her husband redeemed it, it was evidently his duty not only to care for the maintenance of the impoverished widow, but if she were still young, to marry her, and to let the first son born of such a marriage enter into the family of the deceased husband of his wife, so as to inherit the redeemed property, and perpetuate the name and possession of the deceased in Israel. Upon this right, which was founded upon traditional custom, Boaz based this condition, which he set before the nearer redeemer, that if he redeemed the field of Naomi he must also take Ruth, with the obligation to marry her, and through this marriage to set up the name of the deceased upon his inheritance" (pp.488-90).

Elimelech as "brother" - Rabbinic tradition supposes that Boaz, Salmon and Elimelech were blood brothers, sons of Nahshon (Baba Bathra 91a in the Babylonian Talmud). However the term is frequently used of close friends and those in communal relationship with one another, as common today. (David > Jonathan as 'brother' in 2 Sam 1:26).

The kind of practical righteousness demonstrated by Boaz is not often found in Christian circles. We often lack patience, are selfish, and play "political" games in order to get what we want. Our thoughts and desires are centered on ourselves. We find it easy to excuse our actions. We blame our hang-ups on our parents, our materialism on the economy, our inordinate desire

for things on social trends, and secretly excuse our conduct by comparing ourselves with other people. We conclude, "I'm not so bad after all." It is only as we open our hearts to the searching light of Holy Scripture and compare our conduct with what is revealed there that we realize how mercenary, self-centered, and ungodly we may have become. [Cyril Barber, Ruth, 115]

Why doesn't Boaz bring up Ruth at this point in the story? That God is in control, that He will work out His will, that we need to be truthful and upfront doesn't mean we aren't to prayerfully strategize

There is something to be said for being "shrewd as serpents and innocent as doves."

You don't negotiate a deal without using wisdom. If you have a trump card (lit. or fig. speaking) you don't use it when you don't need to. That's negating the very meaning of trump.

The Fact is, Boaz has a trump card. And it wasn't the land. In shrewd fashion, Boaz the businessman is using the land as bait. Ruth is trump.

This is all above-board and honest. But it is a strategy.

"We do not deny that Boaz employed what in modern times would be called a degree of psychology in his handling of the goel. This can be seen in the manner in which he first mentioned the property without mentioning Ruth. However, no scheme which Boaz put forward can be construed in any way as being out of harmony with customary law." [Leggett, 240]

4:4 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֶגְלֶה אֶזְנֶךָ לְאֹמֵר קִנְיָה נֶגְדַּד הֵישְׁבִים וְנִגְדַּד זְקֵנֵי עַמִּי אִם-תִּגְאֹל גְּאֹל
redeem if you want to redeem of my people the elders and before those sitting before acquire to say your ear I would open thought and I
וְאִם-לֹא יִגְאֹל הַגִּידָה לִּי וְאִדְעָה כִּי אֵין זֹלָתְךָ לְגֹאֹל וְאֲנִי אַחֲרָיִךָ וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי
I and he said after you and I to redeem except you there is not for so that I may know me tell you want to redeem and of not
אֶגְאֹל:
will redeem

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“So I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy *it* before those who are sitting *here*, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem *it*, and I am after you.’” And he said, “I will redeem *it*.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“So I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy *it* before those who are sitting *here*, and before the elders of my people.

וְאֲנִי אָמַרְתִּי אֶגְלֶה אֶזְנֶךָ לְאֹמֵר קִנְיָה נֶגְדַּד הֵישְׁבִים וְנִגְדַּד זְקֵנֵי עַמִּי

“I thought to inform you” is in Hebrew literally “and I thought I would uncover your ear.” Figure = “inform you.”

If you will redeem *it*, redeem *it*; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem *it*, and I am after you.”

אִם-תִּגְאֹל גְּאֹל וְאִם-לֹא יִגְאֹל הַגִּידָה לִּי וְאִדְעָה כִּי אֵין זֹלָתְךָ לְגֹאֹל וְאֲנִי אַחֲרָיִךָ

Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

(a) אֶל: Could be translated "one of our redeemers" or "one of our kinsman-redeemers"

If you know the BOR you know that the "kinsman-redeemer" is very imp. to understanding t/entire book.

גְּאֹל (used in over 80 vv. / 10 vv. in Ruth of which this is t/first).

Primary meaning is to do the part of a kinsman - to redeem a relative from danger or difficulty (TWOT).

(b) It's a word that functions in a legal sense related to Israelite family law

Within a family (clan) a *gō'ēl's* is the nearest relative who is responsible for the well-being of his closest kin.

Relevant when the relative is in distress and can't get himself/herself out of a crisis.

(c) In t/OT there are 5 aspects of t/redemptive function of a *gō'ēl*

1. To ensure that the hereditary property of the family stays in the family (Lev 25:25–30)
2. To ensure the freedom of individuals within the family by buying them back (redeem) when they were forced to sell themselves into slavery because of poverty (Lev 25:47–55)
3. To avenge a murder (Num 35:12, 19–27).
Judicial. If your close kin was murdered you had t/right of execution.
4. To receive restitution on behalf of a deceased victim of a crime (Num 5:8). Financial settlement.
You didn't have to dial 88888888888888. In Israel it was 7777777777.
5. To ensure that justice is served in a court case involving a relative.
That is especially relevant this side of the cross.

Job 19:25 “As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, And at the last He will take His stand on the earth.

Psalms 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; Revive me according to Your word.

Jeremiah 50:34 “Their Redeemer is strong, the LORD of hosts is His name; He will vigorously plead their case . . .

What have we talked about as it relates to t/Gospel - key words and concepts like "justification" and "imputation".

Romans 4:3 For what does the Scripture say? “ABRAHAM BELIEVED GOD, AND IT WAS CREDITED TO HIM AS RIGHTEOUSNESS.”

Romans 4:5 But to the one who does not work, but believes in Him who justifies the ungodly, his faith is credited as righteousness,

Romans 5:1 Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

Romans 8:1 **Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.**

1 John 2:1–2 **1 . . . if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; 2 and He Himself is the propitiation for our sins . . .**

The Israelite provision for the *gō'ēl* is based upon an assumption of corporate solidarity and the sanctity of the family/clan: to offend a relative is to offend oneself. The custom of redemption was designed to maintain the wholeness and health of family relationships, even after the person has died. [Block, 674–675]

I suppose in that temporal sense we ought to serve as redeemers for one another within the Church, the family of God.

We ought to defend one another. (weeping, rejoicing, serving, forgiving, loving, keeping no record of wrongs).

We ought to defend one another but what do we all too often do? We don't defend we devour.

We devour one another. Doesn't take long to figure out that your fellow brothers and sisters in X won't hesitate to bite you, they will eat you too.

Galatians 5 **13b but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole Law is fulfilled in one word, in the statement, "YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF." 15 But if you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.**

solution?

16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not carry out the desire of the flesh.

If you're biting and eating another brother or sister in X you're walking in t/flesh.

And he said, "I will redeem *it*."

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֶגְאָל:

I will buy it involves a form of the Hebrew verb which indicates a rather weak answer, not a particularly firm or definite one.* This subtly suggests that he may want to back out of the arrangement, even as he does in verse 6. [UBS]

It is a good business opportunity.

And the irony of, this is that it is being caused by righteousness. Boaz is doing the right thing. Our frustrations are not only caused by sin but also by (seemingly!) ill-timed righteousness. Just when we are about to say, "Oh no! Don't let this other guy take Ruth!"

4:5 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז בְּיוֹם-קְנוֹתָךְ הַשָּׂדֶה מִיַּד נָעֲמִי וּמֵאֵת רוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה אִשְׁת־הַיָּתֵם
the wife of the dead the Moabite Ruth and from of Naomi from the hand the field on the day you acquire Boaz and he said
קָנִיתָ לְהָקִים שְׁם-הַיָּתֵם עַל-נַחֲלָתוֹ:
over his inheritance the name of the dead to raise up ---

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased,

וַיֹּאמֶר בֹּעַז בְּיוֹם-קְנוֹתָךְ הַשָּׂדֶה מִיַּד נָעֲמִי וּמֵאֵת רוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה אִשְׁת־הַיָּתֵם

When the Hebrew text says “you are also acquiring Ruth,” this is equivalent to saying “you must marry Ruth.” This aspect of the obligation is expressed in TEV simply as then you are also buying Ruth, the Moabite widow. [UBS]

Trump card . . . "We do not deny that Boaz employed what in modern times would be called a degree of psychology in his handling of the goel. This can be seen in the manner in which he first mentioned the property without mentioning Ruth. However, no scheme which Boaz put forward can be construed in any way as being out of harmony with customary law." [Leggett, 240]

in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance.”

קָנִיתָ לְהָקִים שְׁם-הַיָּתֵם עַל-נַחֲלָתוֹ:

Two passages in the Old Testament outside of Ruth which deal specifically with the subject: Genesis 38 and Deuteronomy 25:5–10. The passage in Deuteronomy speaks only about a widow’s relation to her brother-in-law, but in the Genesis passage there is an indication that the levirate relation is not limited to the brother-in-law.

So that the field will stay in the dead man’s family is in Hebrew literally “in order to raise the name of the dead to his inheritance.” Basically there are two ideas combined in this Hebrew expression. (1) The aim of the levirate marriage was “to raise a child (son) for the dead.” In this way a man was given a kind of continuing life through his sons. (2) The name of the dead is restored to his inheritance through the fact that the property becomes the property of the child of the widow who is married, rather than becoming the personal asset of the one who acquires the property on behalf of the dead husband. In other words, the property would belong not to the

closest relative, but to the son of the widow. Furthermore, the son would be regarded as the son of the widow's deceased husband rather than as the son of the person who had redeemed the property and married the widow. By fulfilling the responsibility of the closest kin, a person would in essence be diminishing his own property right and estate, and thus depriving his other children of a portion of their inheritance. [UBS]

There are many debates among scholars as to whether this passage (and to what extent) reflects a true levirate practice as in Deut. 25 and Gen. 38. See Bush pp. 221-37. In that section, Bush summarizes as follows:

“Consequently, it is my conclusion that, to avoid confusion, the name "levirate restricted to the legally required social custom prescribed in Deut 25:5-10 and evinced in the narrative of Gen 38. However, the book of Ruth does assume a family responsibility, moral not legal in nature, i.e., voluntary, in which it was incumbent upon the next of kin to marry the wife of a deceased relative and produce descendants for the deceased who will inherit his property. Such an obligation could appropriately be termed a "levirate-type responsibility" since its purposes are very similar to those of levirate marriage proper, and the differences in the two obligations in regard to their legal standing, the legal rights of the parties involved, whether the obligation devolved upon brothers of the deceased or more distant kin, and the social stigma attached to its refusal can all logically be understood to result from the fact that the obligation was less pressing the more distant the kin relationship. To adopt such a term as "redeemer-marriage" (cf. Epstein, *Marriage Laws in the Bible*, 84-88) accords such a moral responsibility a more formal standing and observance than is warranted, for doubtless its performance was rare indeed, representing a remarkably benevolent act on the part of any more distant relation than a brother.” [Bush, 227]

Boaz is following the Law as outlined in Deut. 25. Purpose: that the deceased has a name that is not blotted out of Israel.

25:5–10 5 “When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband’s brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband’s brother to her. 6 “It shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

Leggett adds the note ==>

If a man, after having contracted a marriage, dies without sons, then he dies entirely. It is this blotting out of life which is to be avoided. (51)

Verse 7 . . . (Verses 7-10 - The Ceremony of Refusal)

7 “But if the man does not desire to take his brother’s wife, then his brother’s wife shall go up to the gate to the elders and say, ‘My husband’s brother refuses to establish a name for his brother in Israel; he is not willing to perform the duty of a husband’s brother to me.’ 8 “Then the elders of his city shall summon him and speak to him. And if he persists and says, ‘I do not desire to take her,’ 9 then his brother’s wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, ‘Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother’s house.’ 10 “In Israel his name shall be called, ‘The house of him

whose sandal is removed.’

If the brother refuses, his scorn indicates that he has no further claim on his dead brother's estate.

This is the only law in the Pentateuch (1st 5 books of OT) with a punishment consisting solely of public humiliation.

This is the guideline that Boaz is following in this first scene of Act 4. But there are some diff's which would ind. that t/Law in Dt. was a gen. guideline & that there may be circum. (like those of N. & R.) that are handled a little differently.

Ruth is a Moabite. She's not present at t/gate w/Boaz and t/other man. We also have a woman, t/daughter-law-of Elimelech & property belonging to Elimelech. Person and property.

This suggests that t/dead man's name (Eli.) is to be revived in both redeeming his property & raising a male heir. N. has t/prop., R. is w/widow who could give birth to a male heir.

Listen again to Leggett ==>

If the goel had only married the widow and not redeemed the land, the deceased's name would not have been revived, for the children would not have had any land attaching them to their deceased father, thereby reviving his name.

The two obligations are not of an entirely different nature but are closely related. The book of Ruth, then, shows that the levirate law of Deuteronomy has been extended in both its subjects and objects. The obligation of marrying a childless widow concerned all relatives and operated in order of their degree of relationship. . . . There is no contradiction between the legislation in Deuteronomy and in Ruth; it is merely a question of the case portrayed by the latter being more complex. Deuteronomy speaks of a widow without children, but the book of Ruth adds to that the situation of a widow about to be dispossessed of the land which belonged to her husband. Because circumstances would arise where the obligation of acquiring the property of the deceased would be combined with the duty of raising up children, the number of subjects needed to be extended, since in this undertaking, recourse would need to be made to successive relatives before one would be found willing and able to assume this dual responsibility. [243-48]

4:6 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לֹא אוּכַל לְגַאֲלֵ-לִי פֶן-אֲשַׁחֵית אֶת-נַחְלָתִי גְאֹל-לְךָ אַתָּה
and he said the goel I am able not to redeem it for myself lest I jeopardize my own inheritance you redeem for yourself
אֶת-גְּאֻלָּתִי כִי לֹא-אוּכַל לְגַאֲלֵ:
for my kinsman-redemption I am not able to redeem

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And the closest relative said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem *it* for yourself; you *may have* my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem *it*.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

And the closest relative said, “I cannot redeem *it* for myself, lest I jeopardize my own inheritance.
וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לֹא אוּכַל לְגַאֲלֵ-לִי פֶן-אֲשַׁחֵית אֶת-נַחְלָתִי

He feared that his own estate might be endangered. So he gave the right of redemption to Boaz. Why did he change his mind? (Cf. “I will redeem it,” v. 4b, with “I cannot redeem it,” v. 6.) Perhaps he was too poor to sustain the land and a wife. Or, as some have suggested, perhaps he feared to marry a Moabitess lest the fate of Mahlon, Ruth’s first husband (v. 10), befall him. Perhaps the best view is that when he learned from Boaz that Ruth owned the property along with Naomi (v. 5), he knew that if Ruth bore him a son, that son would eventually inherit not only the redeemed property but probably part of his own estate too. In that sense the nearer redeemer would “endanger” his estate. However, if only Naomi were the widow (not Naomi and Ruth), then no son from the levirate marriage would inherit part of the redeemer’s estate because Naomi was past child-bearing. [BKC]

Some think that the man is acting out of selfishness. Sure he was willing to redeem the property with the assumption that it would be his to keep since Naomi had no heirs and was past child-bearing years. However, with Ruth came the consequence of a future male heir who would then claim the property for the family in the year of Jubilee.

Keil and Delitzsch add:

If he [had] acquired the field by redemption as his own permanent property, he would have increased by so much his own possessions in land. But if he should marry Ruth, the field so redeemed would belong to the son whom he would beget through her, and he would therefore have parted with the money that he had paid for the redemption merely for the son of Ruth, so that he would have withdrawn a certain amount of capital from his own possession, and to that extent have detracted from its worth. [cited in Barber, 113]

On this thought see also Bible Background Commentary, note on 4:5-6.

Funny thought - *“Hey honey, guess what? I found out that a relative died and I'm the heir. I got an inheritance! I got a nice piece of property. It's got to be worth a bit of money. And, uh, guess what else I get? I get this cute 28 year old Moabite girl. Honey?”*

Redeem it for yourself; you *may have* my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it.”

גָּאֵל־לְךָ אֶת־גְּאֻלְתִּי כִּי לֹא־אוּכַל לְגָאֵל:

Some think that he's being selfish. Sure he was willing to redeem the property with the assumption that it would be his to keep since Naomi had no heirs and was past child-bearing years.

However, with Ruth came t/possibility that she would give birth to a son who would then become t/eventual heir to t/land in t/year of Jubilee.

In Israel land was everything. They left Egypt to inherit t/prom. "land" Even w/i families land was imp. Never wanted to lose t/land of your inheritance. There was a provision in t/Law (outlined in t/book of Lev) that guaranteed this wouldn't happen: Year of Jubilee.

Every 50th yr in Israel the YOJ would begin w/a blast from a ram's horn on the Day of Atonement.

During this year of joy and liberation the law stipulated three respects in which the land and people were to be sanctified:

- (1) The land and t/people were to rest. Anything that grew w/i t/fields that year was for t/poor to glean and t/animals to eat.
- (2) Every Israelite who had sold himself into slavery (usually due to poverty they would become indentured servants) was freed.
- (3) All land that had changed hands t/previous 50 yrs. was to revert to the original owner. So t/original distribution of land was to remain intact. All property which the orig owner had sold was to revert (without payment) to the original owner or his lawful heirs.

A future heir born through Ruth would inherit t/land & likely part of t/man's existing estate.

4:7 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְזֹאת לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגְּאֻלָּה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה לְקִיּוֹם כָּל־דָּבָר שֶׁלֹּא אִישׁ
a man removed any matter to confirm and concerning the transfer of property concerning the redemption in Israel was to face and this
בָּעֵלּוֹ וְנָתַן לְרֵעֵהוּ וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:
in Israel was the manner of attestation and this to his neighbor and he gave his sandal

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Now this was *the custom* in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the *manner of attestation* in Israel.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Now this was *the custom* in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter:

וְזֹאת לְפָנִים בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל עַל־הַגְּאֻלָּה וְעַל־הַתְּמוּרָה לְקִיּוֹם כָּל־דָּבָר

With that t/author of t/BOR (unknown) adds a note clarifying a historical matter his readers may not have been familiar with==>

Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter: a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel.

We saw something sim. in Deut. 25 didn't we? If t/brother refused t/widow's request that he become kinsman-redeemer (marry her and raise up an heir for her dead husband's family) ==>

9 then his brother's wife shall come to him in the sight of the elders, and pull his sandal off his foot and spit in his face; and she shall declare, 'Thus it is done to the man who does not build up his brother's house.' 10 "In Israel his name shall be called, 'The house of him whose sandal is removed.'

This seems to be different. I don't see a stigma attached. I see a custom that served to legally bind two parties (what it says) ==>

Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning the redemption and the exchange of land to confirm any matter:

a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the manner of attestation in Israel.

A legal transaction was finalized not by signing a paper but by a dramatic symbolic act that others would witness and remember. The passing of the sandal symbolized Boaz's right to walk on the land as his property.

Sandals were symbolic of property rights. Due to t/fact that when property was off it was typically done by walking it off.

Within the Old Testament, the throwing of a sandal upon a piece of land did mean taking possession of it. Psalm 60:8 ...Over Edom I shall throw My shoe...

Here it's t/reverse: taking off the sandal meant u were giving up any right to t/property.

a man removed his sandal and gave it to another; and this was the *manner of attestation in Israel.*

שָׁלַח אִישׁ נַעֲלוֹ וְנָתַן לְרֵעֵהוּ וְזֹאת הַתְּעוּדָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל:

A legal transaction was finalized not by signing a paper but by a dramatic symbolic act that others would witness and remember. The passing of the sandal symbolized Boaz's right to walk on the land as his property (cf. Deut. 1:36; 11:24; Josh. 1:3; 14:9). After giving his sandal to Boaz, the unknown kinsman moved from the scene and into anonymity. But the name of Boaz has been remembered in all succeeding generations (cf. Ruth 4:14). [BKC]

Within the Old Testament, the throwing of a sandal upon a piece of land did mean taking possession of it Psalm 60:10 in the Hebrew text. (Psalm 60:8), and in the present instance the reversal of the process is true: taking off the sandal meant abandonment of any right to the property. [UBS]

4:8 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבַעַז קְנֵה-לָךְ וַיִּשְׁלֶף בְּעָלָיו:
his sandal and he removed acquire it for yourself to Boaz the goel and he said

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

So the closest relative said to Boaz, “Buy *it* for yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

So the closest relative said to Boaz, “Buy *it* for yourself.” And he removed his sandal.

וַיֹּאמֶר הַגֹּאֵל לְבַעַז קְנֵה-לָךְ וַיִּשְׁלֶף בְּעָלָיו:

The deal is sealed. What follows is an announcement and a blessing.

4:9 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז לְזִקְנֵי וְכָל־הָעָם יְעִדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קָנִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר
all that I have acquired that this day you are witnesses and all the people to the elders Boaz and he said
לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן וּמַחְלוֹן מִיַּד נָעֻמִּי:
Naomi from the hand of and Mahlon was for Kilion all that and was for Elimelech

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, “You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people,

וַיֹּאמֶר בְּעֵז לְזִקְנֵי וְכָל־הָעָם

Public announcement. Note that others had gathered as well.

“You are witnesses today that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon.

יְעִדִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם כִּי קָנִיתִי אֶת־כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְאֵלִימֶלֶךְ וְאֵת כָּל־אֲשֶׁר לְכִלְיוֹן וּמַחְלוֹן מִיַּד נָעֻמִּי:

Most translations give t/impression that Boaz purchased t/estate of Elimelech. Prob. not t/case. A transfer of redemption rights apart from a purchase as we would understand it. More like our laws of inheritance. If t/last parent dies leaving an estate behind, the siblings don't purchase t/estate they legally transfer rights to it.

4:10 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְגַם אֶת־רוּת הַמֹּאֲבִיטָה אִשְׁתׁ מַחֲלוֹן קָנִיתִי לִי לְאִשָּׁה לְהָקִים שְׁמֵ־הַמֵּת
I a name for the dead to raise up as my wife for myself I have acquired Mahlon the wife of the Moabite Ruth and also
עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ וְלֹא־יִכָּרֵת שְׁמֵ־הַמֵּת מֵעַם אָחָיו וּמִשַּׁעַר מְקוֹמוֹ יְעִידִים אַתֶּם הַיּוֹם:
this day you are witnesses his place or from the gate of his brothers from the name of the dead so that it not be cut off over his inheritance

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased may not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his *birth* place; you are witnesses today.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance,

Boaz isn't buying Ruth. “Ruth the Moabite” = full name requisite for this legal setting. Cf. previous uses of the phrase t/o the book.

Widow of Mahlon = first connection in this regard as to who was married to who?

Verses 9-10: Boaz mentions everyone's name except Orpah.

so that the name of the deceased may not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his *birth* place;

“from his brothers” = His family line. As I've said before, my family line will end w/me. (my dad had no brothers, I'm an only child, and my only child is a girl). Not a big deal to us. Was a big deal then.

“from the court of his birthplace” (Beth.) “court” – Boaz intends that t/family of Elimelech/Mahlon will cont. to have representation in the gathering of the town council.

In the end Mr. So-and-So will disappear without a name, but the security of Mahlon's and Elimelech's names is hereby guarded. [Daniel Block, Judges, Ruth. The New American Commentary (721). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers]

Bookends ==>

you are witnesses today.”

Importance of witnesses.

4:11 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּשַּׁעַר וְהַזְקֵנִים יַעֲדִים יִתֵּן יְהוָה אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה
the coming make the woman YHWH give witnesses and the elders who were in the gate all the people and they said
אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ כְּרַחֵל וְכִלְאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׁתֵּיהֶם אֶת־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל וְעָשִׂיהָ־תֵּחִיל
so that you may achieve wealth Israel the house of both of whom built who and as Leah as Rachel to your house
בְּאֶפְרַתָּה וְקָרְאִים בְּבֵית לְחָם:
in Bethlehem and be famous In Ephrathah

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

And all the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, “*We are* witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel; and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem.

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

The statement of all the people present is essentially a kind of blessing, and it typically has a poetic structure. Verse 11 consists of three lines with a meter 3 + 2, 2 + 3, 3 + 3. A literal translation corresponding to the line divisions would be: //The LORD make this woman / who is coming into your house // like Rachel and Leah / who built up the house of Israel. // Prosper in Ephrathah / be renowned in Bethlehem.//

Verse 12 also has a poetic structure consisting of two lines with the meter 2 + 2 + 3, 3 + 2 + 2. A literal rendering by line and phrase would be: // May your house be / like the house of Perez / whom Tamar bore to Judah, // thanks to the children that will give / you the LORD / by this young woman. // It would be excellent if a translation could reflect this type of poetic structure, but that is usually quite difficult. The passage is too short to establish a well-recognized structure, and the content does not lend itself to poetic formulation, since it does not have the normal wealth of figurative expression. Furthermore, it is in the form of a prayer or request and is thus more difficult to render into poetic form. [UBS]

And all the people who were in the court, and the elders, said, “*We are* witnesses.

וַיֹּאמְרוּ כָּל־הָעָם אֲשֶׁר־בַּשַּׁעַר וְהַזְקֵנִים יַעֲדִים

Formal legal certification. Threefold blessing on Boaz follows in the rest of v. 11 and v. 12.

Blessing One (v. 11)	Blessing Two (v. 11)	Blessing Three (v. 12)
May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah,	and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem.	may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah,

both of whom built the house of Israel;		through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman.”
---	--	--

May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel;

יְהוָה יַעַשׂ אֶת־הָאִשָּׁה הַבָּאָה אֶל־בֵּיתְךָ כְּרַחֵל וּכְלֵאָה אֲשֶׁר בָּנוּ שְׂתִיקָהֶם אֶת־בַּיִת יִשְׂרָאֵל

“coming into your home” = as in a Jewish marriage ceremony.

(1) First Part of the Blessing (v. 11a)

May the LORD make the woman who is coming into your home like Rachel and Leah, both of whom built the house of Israel;

(a) Rachel

R. daughter of Laban whom t/OT Patriarch Jacob served for 14 years in order to take her as his wife. She was the mother of Joseph who died in giving birth to Benjamin

(b) Leah

Rachel's sister and t/eldest daughter of Laban. She became t/wife of Jacob thru Laben's deception (Gen. 29). Leah gave birth to 6 sons and a daughter.

Taken together Rachel and Leah (along with their surrogate handmaids, Zilpah & Bilhah) formed t/genealogical foundation for the 12 tribes of Israel.

Significance beyond this fact alone. Remember, from all we can see to this point, Ruth is barren.

Back in chap. 1, we were told that she had been married 10 yrs & yet there were no children. So even now the suspense is not over. But the cloud over the head of Ruth and Boaz is big with mercy and, in keeping w/this prayer of t/elders, will break w/great blessing upon their heads.

This blessing of worship is a prayer & a prophetic pronouncement

Rachel was also barren for many years, as was Leah. Sov. God who opened and shut their wombs. "[God] opened [Leah's] womb, but Rachel was barren" (Genesis 29:31). Then "Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children" (Genesis 30:9). "God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb" (Genesis 30:22)."

Therefore, the prayer that Ruth be like Rachel and Leah was a plea not only that God would open Ruth's womb, but also that Ruth would take her place in the great line of Israel leading to the Messiah. This was the ultimate significance of their prayer that Boaz, through his marriage to Ruth, would be "renowned in Bethlehem." That is in fact where the greatest of all Ruth's sons would be born. [Piper, 103-04]

(2) Second Part (11b)

Boaz certainly did become famous in Bethlehem. BOR and his place in t/genealogical line of X are testimony to that fact.

and may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah and become famous in Bethlehem.

וְעָשָׂה חַיִּיל בְּאֶפְרַתָּה וְקָרָא שְׁמֵם בְּבֵית לְחָם:

What is puzzling is the first part ==>
may you achieve wealth in Ephrathah

Note t/way different versions translate this word:

ESV: “act worthily”

NASB: “achieve wealth”

NIV: “have standing”

“Wealth” prob. isn't the meaning here. Boaz was relatively 'wealthy' as far as that goes.

“Ephrathah” = “Bethlehem” so why the double use?

May be that this 2nd part of t/three-fold blessing is saying t/same thing as t/first and third parts.

EPHRATAH — fruitful. Word translated “wealth” might also carry that same idea.

The elders gave willing witness to this redemption transaction. They blessed Boaz with the desire that the Lord make Ruth a fertile mother. Their mentioning Rachel and Leah has significance. Rachel, named first, had been barren for many years before she bore children. Similarly Ruth had been barren in Moab. [BKC]

“Who bore many children to Jacob” = lit. “who built up the house of Israel” = a metaphor to describe perpetuating or establishing a family line.

Remember, from all we can see to this point, Ruth is barren.

Back in chapter 1, we were told that she had been married ten years to Mahlon, and there were no children (1:4). So even now the suspense is not over. But the cloud over the head of Ruth and Boaz is big with mercy and breaks with blessing on their heads.

They know that Rachel, and Leah were alternately barren and fruitful and that it was God who opened and shut their wombs. “[God] opened [Leah's] womb, but Rachel was barren” (Genesis 29:31). Then “Leah saw that she had ceased bearing children” (Genesis 30:9). “God remembered Rachel, and God listened to her and opened her womb” (Genesis 30:22). These friends also knew that Rachel and Leah were the great matriarchs of Israel. They and their handmaids had given birth to the twelve patriarchs of Israel.

Therefore, the prayer that Ruth be like Rachel and Leah was a plea not only that God would open Ruth's womb, but also that Ruth would take her place in the great line of Israel leading to the Messiah. This was the ultimate significance of their prayer that Boaz, through his marriage to Ruth, would be “renowned in Bethlehem.” That is in fact where the greatest of all Ruth's sons would be born. [Piper, 103-04]

EPHRATAH — fruitful. (1.) The second wife of Caleb, the son of Hezron, mother of Hur, and grandmother of Caleb, who was one of those that were sent to spy the land (1 Chr. 2:19, 50). (2.) The ancient name of Bethlehem in Judah (Gen. 35:16, 19; 48:7). In Ruth 1:2 it is called

“Bethlehem-Judah,” but the inhabitants are called “Ephrathites;” in Micah 5:2, “Bethlehem-Ephratah;” in Matt. 2:6, “Bethlehem in the land of Judah.” In Ps. 132:6 it is mentioned as the place where David spent his youth, and where he heard much of the ark, although he never saw it till he found it long afterwards at Kirjath-jearim; i.e., the “city of the wood,” or the “forest-town” (1 Sam. 7:1; comp. 2 Sam. 6:3, 4). [Easton, M. G. (1893). Easton’s Bible dictionary. New York: Harper & Brothers.]

Word means “fruitful”. The word ḥayil (“valor, worth, ability”) may refer to male virility as the word is used in that fashion. This would make this middle aspect of the threefold blessing consistent with the first and third.

This word ḥayil (“valor, worth, ability”) is used of Boaz (2:1) and of Ruth (3:11). Ephratah (also spelled Ephrath and Ephrathah) was another name for Bethlehem (cf. Gen. 35:19; 48:7; Micah 5:2). The elders prayed that Boaz would be famous in Bethlehem. God abundantly answered their prayers as many have witnessed. [BKC]

Famous in Bethlehem is an expression which is parallel to rich in the clan of Ephrath. In Hebrew it is literally “proclaim (your own) name in Bethlehem.” This is equivalent to “become famous.”* Some receptor languages have idioms which are relatively close to the Hebrew; for example, “may you have a good name in Bethlehem,” “may all people in Bethlehem know your name,” or “may your name be spoken by all in Bethlehem.” This type of blessing is still current in the Middle East. [UBS]

It is interesting that the nearer go'el, this man of Beth., has been forgotten. He is a 'no-name' (cf. Job). Boaz would have known him. But he remains anonymous. Boaz, on the other hand, has a name that lives on forever in sacred writ and is enrolled, with Ruth, in the pedigree of Jesus Christ, whose name is above every other.

4:12 EXEGESIS

HEBREW TEXT / INTERLINEAR:

וְיִהְיֶה בֵּיתְךָ כְּבֵית פְּרִזְ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה תָּמָר לְיִהוּדָה מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֶּן יְהוָה לְךָ
to you YHWH he will give that from the seed to Judah Tamar whom she bore Perez like the house of your house and may it be
מִן־הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת:
this from the young woman

ENGLISH TRANSLATION [NASB]:

“Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD shall give you by this young woman.”

CONTEXTUAL, GRAMMATICAL, THEOLOGICAL, APPLICATIONAL ANALYSIS:

“Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah,
וְיִהְיֶה בֵּיתְךָ כְּבֵית פְּרִזְ אֲשֶׁר־יָלְדָה תָּמָר לְיִהוּדָה

“Moreover” = “there's more!”

The mention of Perez, son of Judah and Tamar, involves a reference to the levirate union between Judah and Tamar. In that case no marriage was involved, for Tamar's connection with Judah was only legitimate for the purpose of raising children. If the union had been perpetuated, it would have been illegitimate. Perez was the ancestor of the clan of Ephrath, to which Boaz himself belonged. It may therefore be important to introduce a footnote at this point to indicate his relation to the family of Perez. This is brought out in the genealogy (verses 18–22), but it may not be evident to the reader.

The blessing of verse 12 speaks consistently about the family of Boaz and, to this extent does not mention the fact that a child born from the marriage of Boaz to Ruth would be technically considered to be the child of Ruth's deceased husband, Mahlon.* However, since Boaz and the deceased husband belonged to the same clan, the failure to mention Mahlon is not too important. Furthermore, the whole emphasis of this story is upon the character of Boaz and his faithfulness to the tradition of Israel. [UBS]

through the offspring which the LORD shall give you by this young woman.”

מִן־הַנְּעֻרָה הַזֹּאת: יְהוָה לְךָ מִן־הַזֶּרַע אֲשֶׁר יִתֶּן

Prophetic ==>

(3) Third Aspect of this three-fold blessing (v. 12)

“Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring which the LORD will give you by this young woman.” Faith here; a recog. that God works w/a purpose.

“offspring the LORD gives you = cf. Ps. 127:3”

Little did they realize that from this union would issue Israel’s greatest kings including David and the Eternal King, the Lord Jesus Christ. Perez may have been named here: (a) because of the levirate connection with Tamar (see the Introduction), (b) because Perez’s descendants had settled in Bethlehem (1 Chron. 2:5, 18, 50-54; note “Ephrathah” and “Bethlehem” in 1 Chron. 2:50-51), and (c) because Perez was an ancestor of Boaz (Ruth 4:18-21). [BKC]

It is very difficult in some languages to speak of the LORD giving something by means of someone else. This makes the LORD the primary agent and this young woman becomes the secondary agent. For many languages the only way to express this relation is to say “that the LORD will cause this young woman to give to you” or “that this young woman will give to you; the LORD will cause it.” [UBS]

the mother of Perez was Tamar / father Judah.

Several points t/o the book of Ruth it seems that the author is thinking about Genesis 38

6 Now Judah took a wife for Er his firstborn, and her name was Tamar. 7 But Er, Judah’s firstborn, was evil in the sight of the LORD, so the LORD took his life. 8 Then Judah said to Onan, “Go in to your brother’s wife, and perform your duty as a brother-in-law to her, and raise up offspring for your brother.” 9 Onan knew that the offspring would not be his; so when he went in to his brother’s wife, he wasted his seed on the ground in order not to give offspring to his brother. 10 But what he did was displeasing in the sight of the LORD; so He took his life also. 11 Then Judah said to his daughter-in-law Tamar, “Remain a widow in your father’s house until my son Shelah grows up”; for he thought, “I am afraid that he too may die like his brothers.” So Tamar went and lived in her father’s house. 12 Now after a considerable time Shua’s daughter, the wife of Judah, died; and when the time of mourning was ended, Judah went up to his sheepshearers at Timnah, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite. 13 It was told to Tamar, “Behold, your father-in-law is going up to Timnah to shear his sheep.” 14 So she removed her widow’s garments and covered herself with a veil, and wrapped herself, and sat in the gateway of Enaim, which is on the road to Timnah; for she saw that Shelah had grown up, and she had not been given to him as a wife. 15 When Judah saw her, he thought she was a harlot, for she had covered her face. 16 So he turned aside to her by the road, and said, “Here now, let me come in to you”; for he did not know that she was his daughter-in-law. And she said, “What will you give me, that you may come in to me?” 17 He said, therefore, “I will send you a young goat from the flock.” She said, moreover, “Will you give a pledge until you send it?” 18 He said, “What pledge shall I give you?” And she said, “Your seal and your cord, and your staff that is in your hand.” So he gave them to her and went in to her, and she conceived by him. 19 Then she arose and departed, and removed her veil and put on her widow’s garments. 20 When Judah sent the young goat by his friend the Adullamite, to receive the pledge from the woman’s hand, he did not find her. 21 He asked the men of her place, saying, “Where is the temple prostitute who was by the road at Enaim?” But they said, “There has been no temple prostitute here.” 22 So he returned to Judah, and said, “I did not find her; and furthermore, the men of the place said, ‘There has been no temple prostitute here.’” 23 Then Judah said, “Let her keep them, otherwise we will become a laughingstock. After all, I sent this young goat, but you did not find her.” 24 Now it was about three months later that Judah was informed, “Your

daughter-in-law Tamar has played the harlot, and behold, she is also with child by harlotry.” Then Judah said, “Bring her out and let her be burned!” 25 It was while she was being brought out that she sent to her father-in-law, saying, “I am with child by the man to whom these things belong.” And she said, “Please examine and see, whose signet ring and cords and staff are these?” 26 Judah recognized them, and said, “She is more righteous than I, inasmuch as I did not give her to my son Shelah.” And he did not have relations with her again. 27 It came about at the time she was giving birth, that behold, there were twins in her womb. 28 Moreover, it took place while she was giving birth, one put out a hand, and the midwife took and tied a scarlet thread on his hand, saying, “This one came out first.” 29 But it came about as he drew back his hand, that behold, his brother came out. Then she said, “What a breach you have made for yourself!” So he was named Perez.

Perez is mentioned here because he was the ancestor of Boaz’s clan living in Bethlehem. Perez – v. 18.

This prayer isn't about t/lack of integrity evid. by Tamar and Judah. It's about t/common levirate nature of their unions.

Through Tamar, whose husband had died childless, Judah had fathered Perez, who became the ancestor of a host of clans, including the clan of Boaz. Now the witnesses prayed that through this widow, Ruth, Boaz may father a son and live on through his numerous progeny, even as Judah lives on in his descendants. There is no mention of the men’s characters either. However, considering the rabbinic hermeneutical principle of “from greater to lesser,” the reader cannot help but think that if Yahweh had given immoral Judah a double blessing in the birth of twins and if Judah flourished through Perez, how much brighter are the prospects for Boaz and Ruth. These two have been presented from beginning to end as persons with the highest ethical standards; they embody covenant hesed. But the witnesses did not appeal to their characters. Recognizing Yahweh as the source of blessing and family, they assumed that Boaz’s having offspring through Ruth depended on the divine gift.

Little did those who uttered these words realize how prophetic the words would be. Ten of them were witnesses to this event because they had been summoned; the rest had simply gathered out of curiosity over what was happening in the gate. Now, inspired by the Spirit of God, they joined in a spontaneous and unanimous pronouncement of blessing upon Boaz. They had come to witness, but they left prophesying. Had they been around long enough to see the fulfillment of their prayer, they would have observed the establishment of a name and a house far greater than Perez, the house of King David, a name commemorated to this day in the flag of the state of Israel. [Block, D. I. (1999). Vol. 6: Judges, Ruth. The New American Commentary (723–724). Nashville: Broadman & Holman Publishers]