

THE BOOK OF RUTH

God's Silent Providence



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Introduction & Opening Thoughts

We can view the Book of Ruth as a continuation of the Book of Judges, and is most probably written by the same person (presumably Samuel). In its introduction, the context of the story was made clear, “*in the days when the judges ruled*” (1:1). It was set at the same period when there was no king in Israel.

Continuing from our discussion from Judges 17-21, then, we see a trend whereby the writer keeps on zooming in on what happened in Bethlehem in Judah. Again in the Book of Ruth, we see that Elimelek and Naomi were originally from Bethlehem in Judah.

Levite from Jdg 17-18	Levite from Jdg 19-21	Naomi’s Husband Elimelek from Ruth 1
Young Levite from Bethlehem in Judah (17:7) Went to Micah’s house in the hill country of Ephraim (17:8)	A Levite who lived in a remote area in the hill country of Ephraim (19:1) Took a concubine from Bethlehem in Judah (19:1)	A man from Bethlehem in Judah (1:1)

The story in the Book of Ruth zooms in even further to this person named Ruth, who would be the great-grandmother of David. This zooming in is intended to show to the readers that despite the corruption and decline of morality in Israel, and in Bethlehem in Judah, God is preserving this tribe to be the kingly tribe, and the city to be the birthplace of David, as it would be exactly how the Book of Ruth would be ended.

At the very beginning we still see this recurring theme from the book of judges, whereby the people are doing what was right in their own eyes. Elimelek, because of famine, went to Moab and settled there. In less than 10 years, his sons had already intermarried with the Moabite (1:5). This indicated that Elimelek and Naomi put the preservation of their faith as second in importance. The specific mention of the difficulty for a Moabite and their descendants to enter into the congregation of the Lord (Deut 23:2-6) was problematic. Added to that was Naomi’s first reaction of asking Orpah and Ruth to return to their “*people and their gods*” (1:15) showed how she thought physical survival as being more importance than spiritual conversion.

Throughout the remainder of the story, the writer made repetitive reminders that Ruth was a Moabite, a despised foreigner for Israel (1:22; 2:2, 6, 21; 4:5, 10) and even Ruth herself acknowledged her status as such (2:10). But its repetitive nature was intended not to emphasize her lowliness; but on the contrary, it was to show that the greatest of virtue could be and was in fact exhibited by a foreigner.

One final thing I would like to say regarding the Book of Ruth; and something I would like you to keep in mind throughout the story, is how the Book of Ruth is filled with symbolisms and typologies. I shall conclude by explaining where the symbolisms are found; however, it is very important to note that the Book of Ruth prepares us for David, under whose rule Israel would finally reach its Old Testament climax. And it would also present David as a typology of Christ, who would finally accomplish the Kingdom of God. It is interesting, therefore, to see how Ruth was omitted from the genealogy in Ruth 4 but included in the patriarchal genealogy in Matt 1.

Chapter 1: The Witness of Naomi

However, despite the compromised spirituality, it seemed that Naomi’s family had become a salt and light for Moab, especially for Orpah and Ruth. After the tragic death of Elimelek and his two sons, we are left in the story with three widows. Time for a little context. In our days, women are normally independent financially. However,



during the biblical times, widows had no means of attaining income; which is why the Bible places a lot of emphasis on the need to take care of widowsⁱ. Therefore, the death of Elimelek, and his sons Mahlon and Kilion was indeed a great blow to Naomi, to Orpah and to Ruth. They were suddenly left without a single bread-winner in the family. Naomi, genuinely concerned for her daughters-in-law, asked them to go back to their own families so they can remarry (1:8-9). The only way out of this mess, which was by way of levirate marriage was not possible since Naomi had no more sonⁱⁱ. This was their only chance of survival. Their situation was so desperate, when Naomi returned to Judah, she refused to be called Naomi and said, *“Call me Mara, because the Almighty has made my life very bitter. I went away full, but the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi? The Lord has afflicted me; the Almighty has brought misfortune upon me”* (1:20-21).

However, both strangely refused to leave Naomi and insisted on staying with her (1:10). After some convincing, Orpah listened to sense and left, while Ruth clung on, even making a very brave statement: *“Where you will go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people shall be my people and your God my God”* (1:16). She made this promise not in ignorance; she knew very well the risks involved; being prepared for even death. She continued her oath with this, *“where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD deal with me, be it ever so severely, if even death separates you and me”* (1:17)ⁱⁱⁱ.

Notice that Ruth had already taken her oath in the name of the LORD—Yahweh, which meant that she had already professed her faith in the God of Israel. In this regard, we need to hand it to Elimelek and his family: while they were sojourners in Moab, not only did they not deny their faith, they managed to be good-enough witnesses to gain such extraordinary loyalty from their daughters-in-law. Had they been involved in idolatry as well, their lives would have been no different and their witness barren.

Lastly, Naomi addressed God at this moment as *“Almighty”* (1:21), which used the Hebrew *“Shaddai,”* which emphasized on the power and sovereignty of God. This title is found 48 times in the whole Old Testament, amongst which 31 times were used in the Book of Job. Its usage there speaks of God’s sovereignty in the midst of human suffering. Naomi accepted her cruel fate as something that the sovereign God had allowed to happen in her life.

Chapter 2: Providence

The story continued with Ruth and Naomi already in Israel, and already facing the difficulty living as widows. Ruth (her identity as a Moabitess is still emphasized) asked Naomi the permission to pickup the leftover grains from the threshing floor. They lived on others’ pity and charity, as was provided for them through the Law in **Deut 24:19**; *“when you are harvesting in your field and you overlook a sheaf, do not go back to get it. Leave it for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all the work of your hand.”*^{iv}

The Book of Ruth tells of men and women of great character in the midst of a national and spiritual crisis. Ruth continued to show her loyalty to Naomi, and proving that she wasn’t simply a gullible woman who did not know what she was getting herself into by swearing allegiance to her mother-in-law who had lost everything. She dwelled in Israel as a foreigner, an outcast, a widow. She worked tirelessly gleaning at the fields (2:7b). She was at risk of being treated with incivility, which was why Boaz had to ensure that the workers would not touch her (2:9). Both Ruth and Naomi knew full well that Ruth could be mistreated or even harmed (see 2:22), and was more surprised that someone would look upon her with favor (9:10). In a very quick turn of events, Ruth had



already shown herself as someone who was familiar with suffering; and kept her virtues meanwhile; not becoming bitter but holding fast to her commitments.

Boaz also showed himself to be a respected man of character. He and his workers seemed to respect one another, and pronouncing blessings to one another in the name of the Lord (2:4). Do keep in mind that this was a short time after a great famine. As a field-owner, Boaz would have been in big trouble the past 10 years of famine, and would have had difficulty keeping his workers employed. The fact that their relationship was so mutually respecting would mean that Boaz had treated them well even in times of famine. Boaz's treatment of Ruth was also very kind, and he went beyond what was necessary to show her such grace. And his reason for doing so was also very admirable: *"I've been told all about what you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband-how you left your father and mother and your homeland to live with a people you did not know before. May the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge"* (2:11-12). Such statement revealed Boaz's character, that he ① appreciated and valued Ruth's virtuous act, ② that he had faith that the Lord, the God of Israel would look upon such thing with favor ③ that he honored faith from amongst the Gentiles, unlike how most Israelites throughout history would handle those outside the nationality. Boaz also blessed her abundantly by allowing her to partake in the meals of the workers (2:14), and then purposely left more "leftovers" for her (2:15-16). Boaz's grace and kindness did not forego the need for labor; much like the grace and kindness of God to us. I think Boaz pronounced a blessing upon Ruth in the exact way God would have spoken to her; thus showing himself as someone who sought after the ways of God.

There was also a mutuality of kindness and respect. Naomi and Ruth respected one another and tried to be kind to one another by thinking what was best for the other party, not for themselves. The workers and Boaz respected one another in a sincere way (2:4). Now, Boaz respected Ruth for the virtues she displayed, and Ruth also respected Boaz for the undeserved kindness he had shown her (2:10, 13). They were remnants that God preserved despite the overall decline of spirituality in Israel.

As I looked at chapter 2, one particular statement struck me. And this was, *"and she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz"* (2:3). The term *"she happened to"* had a very strong nuance of an unintentional incident, one which was unplanned. However, the way the writer put it, it was anything but accidental. First, we were introduced to Boaz before we were told of the accident (2:1), thus preparing us for what was about to happen. Second, he tied it up with another accident, another unplanned event, *"And behold, Boaz came..."* (2:4 ESV). It was an announcement that bore no incident. Ruth worked, and behold! Boaz came. She had been gleaning since morning (2:7), but Boaz's arrival for the writer was connected to her working there. In the sight of men, this was a mere accident, an unplanned luck that had just struck. But it was actually providence, it was God working behind the scenes. The favor Ruth found in the eyes of Boaz resulted from the favor she found in the eyes of God; and the undeserved grace bestowed upon her by Boaz was the grace first released by the Lord, under whom she took shelter.

Chapter 3-4: Righteous Husband

In chapter 3 we find Naomi's strategy in finding Ruth a husband. This was done entirely for Ruth's benefit, and Naomi's genuine concern for Ruth as she displayed at the very beginning when her husband and sons died, was consistent. Naomi's purpose was finding *"a home for (Ruth), where (Ruth) will be well provided for"* (3:1). With this, she devised a plan with a clear intention, which was for Boaz to take Ruth as wife. Naomi knew this was



very possible, because Boaz was a kinsman (3:2) and thus a possible kinsman-redeemer for Ruth. For explanation of the law for kinsman-redeemer, see note below^v.

So Naomi's intent was clear. What was not was her strategy. And this ritual is lost to us because of the difference in culture. And Ruth was only partially aware also, which was why Naomi only instructed her without telling her what was about to transpire (3:4 – "Boaz will tell you what to do"). However, Naomi knew full well what she was planning (and it seemed that Ruth also knew it was an act of proposal, for she did not lie passively but voiced out her request – 3:9), and it seemed that Boaz also immediately recognize the proposal (3:10). So we, being unfamiliar with the culture of ancient Israel, are the ones left clueless.

Some commentators insisted that the "*uncovering of feet*" (3:4) was in fact an Old Testament euphemism for exposing one's genitalia; and that therefore Naomi had suggested Ruth to sexually seduce Boaz. I tend to disagree. Both Ruth and Boaz were portrayed as upright, and Boaz was also portrayed as someone who was well-versed with the Law. He allowed Ruth to glean in obedience to the Law. He knew that a kinsman-redeemer was a providence of law for the continuance of lineage and inheritance (4:5). He was going to allow another kinsman-redeemer the first opportunity because the Law gave that priority (3:12), despite the clear indication that he was already attracted to Ruth's character. With this in mind, it was highly unlikely that she was uncovering his genitalia and have him respond to that with "*the Lord bless you,*" "*this kindness is greater,*" and "*you are a woman of noble character*" (3:10-11). Although her washing, putting on perfume and putting on her best dress (3:3) would be done to appear physically pleasing to Boaz, attraction can be asexual (and Boaz's subsequent comment indicated that his attraction was more due to her godly characters).

I found a good explanation for Ruth's request of spreading Boaz's garment over her in 3:9, an act she requested because Boaz was her kinsman-redeemer. John Piper explained it by noting that the Hebrew for garment (or skirt in the ESV) was the same word as "wing," and the only other place where that word was used in the Book of Ruth was earlier in 2:12 when Boaz blessed Ruth by saying "*may the Lord repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have taken refuge*"^{vi}. And we have been witnessing all along how Boaz was God's channel of rewarding Ruth. And so, the act of marrying Ruth would be the final and complete act of taking Ruth under his wing, or under his protection. Piper also made a reference to **Ezekiel 16:8**, a reference for a similar act done by God Himself, which was spreading His garment over us and taking us to become His own by way of covenant^{vii}.

But what totally impressed Boaz was this choice that Ruth took, which was to knowingly attempt to achieve a levirate marriage with an old man. Boaz took this as a "*greater kindness than one she had shown earlier*" (3:10). Now many would think that this meant that she was kind for offering herself to an ugly old man when she could have had a younger man of her own choosing, but I think it went far beyond that. The Hebrew word "kheh'-sed" used could also be translated "devotion," or "deeds of devotion,"^{viii} which I think would have been more accurate. Boaz compared this act of devotion to an earlier one. Before this, he was impressed with, and praised Ruth for her act of leaving her homeland to be with a people she did not know, and taking shelter under the Lord (2:11-12). This decisive act was an act of faith, which decided to follow God despite the absence of self-benefit; thereby placing oneself under His shelter. This was her saving faith which ingrafted her as an Israelite. However, the fact that Ruth now ACTIVELY tried to obey the law of levirate marriage signified that her faith was made complete by her action (see usage of the term "faith made complete by action" in **James 2:22**)^{ix}. She was now more Israel than the Israelites; and more faithful than those who profess the faith.

Naomi might have intended for the proposal to be slightly seductive, the commentators are split over this matter. But I think it is sound to say that both Boaz and Ruth had acted in a righteous way, and the proposal was



done and taken not in an adulterous manner but a lawful one. And it was an inspiring story of a man and a woman who fell in love and was united by the purpose God placed in their hearts.

Next Boaz made good his promise to Ruth, and immediately went up to the town gate, gathered the other kinsman-redeemer as well as the town-elders (4:1-2) and proceeded to enforce the redemption of Naomi's land as required by **Lev 25:25-28** (see note ^{iv} below). The gathering of the town-elders was a requirement of Law in case there was a refusal of duty (**Deut 25:7-10**). Notice how this act was now initiated by Boaz, with intent to immediately take over such duty if it were rejected. Levirate marriage was something shunned, which the people would avoid whenever possible because it carried with it a risk. Such marriage was a provision of Law to carry on the name of a deceased Israelite; and the first son born from such marriage would need to be named after the deceased, so that his lineage is ensured (**Deut 25:6**). So there was a risk, however minimal; and that was if they were not given a second son through the marriage. If such a thing occurred, the name of the relative who went on with the levirate marriage would be the one vanishing from history. This was also why Judah's sons did Tamar injustice by spilling their semen on the ground to refrain from having children through such levirate marriage, and was punished by God for such an act^x.

The kinsman-redeemer wanted the land (4:5b) but then refused when Boaz mentioned how a levirate marriage was part of the deal (4:6). His reason for refusal was "*lest I impair my own inheritance*" (4:6 **ESV**). He was afraid of the risk involved. One ironical joke we get from this, therefore, was the fact that the kinsman-redeemer's name remained unnamed, and his story in the Bible ended the very moment he announced his refusal. He just got erased from history because he did not want to be erased from history! So, I think it was the writer's intentional sense of humor (which was divinely inspired, by the way) that refrained from revealing the man's name. And as we shall discuss, Boaz's name was thenceforward remembered as the ancestor of King David.

The elders gave Boaz a blessing that was almost prophetic, wishing that the marriage would produce descendants who would build the nation as Rachel and Leah's (wives of Jacob, whose sons made the 12 tribes of Israel), and Perez – a descendant of Judah born from a levirate-like marriage who would be (but not yet at this stage of the story) the forefather of David.

Conclusion of Chapter 4: The Purpose of the Book

The very end of the Book of Ruth revealed the purpose for which it was writ. The Book of Ruth, as the Book of Judges, was not written as a live coverage; it was written long after the events had transpired. Its beginning recalled "*in the days when the judges ruled*" (1:1), and its end listed the genealogy of David (4:18-22), which meant that it was written at least during or after David's reign.

It had that very purpose, one that was closely knit with the Book of Judges. The Book of Judges had the central theme that because there was no king in Israel, everyone did as they deemed right. It ended with the story of the Benjamite, who were to produce Saul. It was an unfaithfulness that resulted in a bad king. The story of the Book of Ruth presented us with the opposite story. We see throughout the book inspiring stories of faith in the unlikeliest places.

- **Naomi:** In the very same days when there was no king, when everyone did as they saw right, Naomi became light and salt to Moab.
- **Ruth:** Ruth the pagan showed extraordinary faith and became ingrafted to Israel; and then proved herself to be a do-er of the Word. She did more than the Law required and not only professed faith in



the Hebrew God despite the dire consequences for her doing so (and was therefore ingrafted to Israel – Saving Faith); but subsequently lived in that faith as she insisted on a levirate marriage when she could choose for herself the younger and the richer (and therefore exhibited good works with her faith – serving faith).

- **Boaz:** In days where no one followed the Law (and thus did as they saw right), Boaz showed such accurate understanding of not only what the Law required, but also what the Law intended. His act of showing mercy to Ruth went beyond what was required, but it accomplished what was intended as he showed mercy and kindness to one undeserving.
- And all throughout the story, we see God working behind the scene, accomplishing His plan and purpose through every seemingly accidental event.

And as the intended audience would see it, this was the story of the **lineage of David**; the King of God’s choosing. In the patriarchal Israel, where lineage was of utmost importance, there surely were some people who questioned David’s ancestry. After all, he was a descendant of Ruth the Moabitess, which according to the Bible could not be ingrafted into Israel even up to the tenth generation (**Deut 23:3-4**). However, Ruth proved herself more Israel than the Israelites; and had more faith than those of the faith. She showed that she was not a Moabite at heart, who failed to show kindness (Hebrew “kheh’-sed”) to the wandering Israel. That kheh’-sed was a recurring theme in the Book of Ruth^{xi} showed that Ruth, unlike the Moabites, exhibited kindness; and did so beyond what even Israel had done. Here was what the Ammonites and Moabites (both the descendants of Lot through incest) did wrong; and what Ruth did to show she was unlike her people:

- What the Ammonites and Moabites did that made them forbidden: ① Did not offer kheh’-sed, or the hospitality of bread and water despite having no conflict with Israel^{xii} ② Hired Balaam to pronounce a curse on Israel, but was conversely cursed for doing so.
- How Ruth was unlike her ancestors: ① Repeatedly displayed kheh’-sed to Naomi and to Boaz despite being the despised foreigner ② Was blessed with the Lord’s kheh’-sed by Naomi (**1:8-9**) and was blessed by Boaz (**2:12; 3:10**).

And finally, the Book of Ruth was a beautiful literature filled with the following themes, often put in the form of symbolism:

- **Kindness (Kheh’-sed).** See how this theme was repeated in the Book:
 - **1:8.** Ruth and Orpah showed kindness to their dead husbands and to Naomi
 - **1:8.** Naomi pronounced the blessing of kindness to Ruth and Orpah
 - **2:13.** Ruth said that Boaz had treated her with kindness
 - **2:20.** Naomi said that Boaz had been showing kindness to Naomi and Ruth
 - **3:10.** Boaz said that Ruth exhibited an initial kindness
 - **3:10.** Boaz said that her subsequent kindness in insisting on the levirate marriage was even greater than the first.
- **Blessing (and of emptiness and full-ness).** See how this was paid a consistent attention throughout:
 - **1:1.** Bethlehem – the “house of bread” is empty
 - **1:11.** Naomi’s womb is empty
 - **1:22.** Time for harvest. The house of bread has bread again
 - **1:8-9.** Naomi blessed Orpah and Ruth
 - **1:21.** Naomi went away *full*, and returned *empty*
 - **2:4.** Boaz blessed the harvesters



- **2:4.** The harvesters blessed boaz
- **2:12.** Ruth blessed by Boaz.
- **2:14.** Ruth ate in abundance (having leftovers)
- **2:18.** Ruth brought this abundance back to Naomi
- **2:19.** Naomi blessed the field owner
- **2:20.** Naomi blessed Boaz
- **3:10.** Boaz blessed Ruth
- **3:17.** Boaz did not allow Ruth to return to Naomi *empty*, thus Naomi is no longer *empty*
- **4:11-12.** The elders blessed Boaz and Ruth’s marriage
- **4:15.** The women blessed Naomi. Naomi’s barren life is renewed and sustained
- **4:15-16.** Naomi was *full* again. Ruth was better to her than seven sons (seven being the number of perfection).
- **4:17.** Naomi was abundant. Naomi “took Obed by her lap” and the women said “Naomi has a son” probably indicating that she adopted Obed.
- **Redemption.** The stories are one of redemption and restoration.

○

Rejection or Loss	Redemption and Restoration
1:1 Bethlehem the “House of Bread” was empty	1:6 The Lord came to aid and the house of bread had bread again
1:20-21 Naomi the pleasant is bitter. She went away full but returned empty	4:17. Mara the bitter is now perfectly jubilant. She was empty but is now filled.
Deut 23:34 Moabites were forbidden from the assembly of the Lord	1:16-17 Ruth professed the Israelite’s faith. 2:11-12 Boaz recognized Ruth’s action of taking refuge under the Lord. 3:10 Boaz recognized her good deed that arose from faith

- This term, “kinsman-redeemer” that is exclusively used in the Book of Ruth (**2:20; 3:9; 3:12; 3:13; 4:1; 4:3; 4:4; 4:6; 4:8; 4:14**) spoke of the more inward spiritual redemption that is to be found by faith.

So what was the Book trying to tell its readers? I will summarize it this way:

- **Ingrafted Branches.** That Ruth was not part of the chosen people of Israel, but she was ingrafted into it. Those who are strictly looking at this from the legalistic point of view might find difficulty accepting this, but **Rom 11:11-24** places all of us non-Israelite Christian at exactly the same position. Like Ruth, we are the wild olive shoot, not the natural branches. We were grafted in and now share the nourishing sap from the olive root (**Rom 1:17**). And how did this happen without God breaking His own Word? Because descendancy from Abraham need to be defined first and foremost through the shared characteristic of his faith and not his blood. Or, as Paul explained it, “*it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring*” (**Rom 9:8**). “*If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise*” (**Gal 3:29**). In the Book of Ruth, Ruth was measured against the faith of the Israelites, and she succeeded where many failed (remember this was during the days of the judges, where most Israelite did as they deemed right); showing herself a true Israelite and a descendant of Abraham through faith.



- **Remnants.** We see throughout the Book of Ruth examples of true faith; of Ruth and Boaz specifically, but also of Naomi. Each showed sincere love for each other that is based not on self-righteousness, but on the Law of the Lord. Again, in the context that this was in an age where all of Israel was in a spiritual decline, such an atmosphere displays how God has always worked: by preserving for Himself a remnant of people who are faithful to Him.
- **Faith in Action.** It was a view of history through the good that had already been accomplished; and to us, this was a continued promise of such goodness; if we would act in faith believing that the Author and Perfecter of our own faith would accomplish in us His plan and purpose; in ways which are yet to be evident. Soli deo Gloria!

ⁱ **Old Testament.** Note the law which required the people to set apart income for the widows in **Deut 14:28-29; Deut 16:9-12**. The rebuke not caring for widows or even oppressing them in **Job 22:9; Job 24:3; Isa 1:23; Isa 10:2; Mal 3:5**. God is described as “*a defender of widows*” (**Ps 68:5**).

New Testament. Such requirement is carried over to the New Testament. The exhortation that the Church should care for the widows is found in **1 Tim 5:3-16; Jam 1:27**. The rebuke not caring for widows or even oppressing them in **Mar 12:40/ Luk 20:47; Acts 6:1**.

ⁱⁱ Levirate marriage is commanded in **Deut 25:5-10**, which basically compels a brother to marry his deceased brother’s widow so as to continue his lineage and ensuring care for the widow.

ⁱⁱⁱ This was a phrase which was often used to take an oath and to place a curse on someone. See other usages in **1 Sam 3:17; 1 Sam 14:44; 1 Sam 20:13; 1 Sam 25:22; 2 Sam 3:9; 2 Sam 19:13; 1 Kings 2:23; 2 Kings 6:31**. And it was used also by the pagans to take oaths to their gods (**1 Kings 19:2; 1 Kings 20:10**).

^{iv} See other verses ensuring this charity in **Lev 19:9, Lev 23:22**.

^v Kinsman-redeemer in its exact term is only used seven times in the Bible, and all in the Book of Ruth (Baker’s Evangelical Dictionary of Biblical Theology), its commandment is stated firstly in **Deut 25:5-10**, which commanded the levirate marriage so as to ensure the continuance of lineage. Also, there is the Law that the land must stay within the allocated inheritance, and therefore, needs to be redeemed by the closest relative (see **Lev 25:25-28**). Thus, descendant and land need to be secured by the family or their closest relative.

^{vi} Piper, J (1984) *Ruth: Strategic Righteousness*. Taken from <http://www.desiringgod.org/sermons/ruth-strategic-righteousness>

^{vii} Ibid

^{viii} Strong’s Number 2617

^{ix} Note how Tamar was similarly praised as being more righteous than Judah in **Gen 38:26** for insisting on accomplishing the levirate marriage. In the Bible, the levirate marriage is initiated by the male, not the female. He is to take her as wife, and she is to be taken as wife. However, instead of sitting idly and accepting their fates, both Tamar and Ruth took active actions to ensure such marriage actually took place.

^x I had already explained this in detail in “*The Story of Rahab: Faith in Unlikeliest Places.*” Further explanation can be found there.



^{xi} The theme of *kheh'-sed* (kindness) in the book of Ruth:

- **Ruth 1:8.** Ruth and Orpah showed kindness to their dead husbands and to Naomi
- **Ruth 1:8.** Naomi pronounced the blessing of kindness to Ruth and Orpah
- **Ruth 2:13.** Ruth said that Boaz had treated her with kindness
- **Ruth 2:20.** Naomi said that Boaz had been showing kindness to Naomi and Ruth
- **Ruth 3:10.** Boaz said that Ruth exhibited an initial kindness
- **Ruth 3:10.** Boaz said that her subsequent kindness in insisting on the levirate marriage was even greater than the first.

^{xii} See **Deut 2:9.** Instruction not to provoke the Moabites to war. **Deut 2:19.** Instruction not to provoke the Ammonites to war. It was the Ammonites who did not give water and bread to the Israelites (), and it was the Moabites who employed Balaam to curse Israel (**Num 22**). The Moabites (sold, not gave) water and food to the Israelites (**Deut 2:29**), but apparently not as an act of humanity for they later tried to curse them. They might have simply sold them food and water for simple reasons of trade. The act of giving water and food was a necessary charity in an age where travelling in the desert without such charity could mean certain death. It was therefore an act of blatant mercilessness for the Ammonites not to give water and food. Even though the Moabites did give food and water, they might have simply utilized the need and turned it to opportunities for profitable trade (**Deut 2:29** clarified that they in fact sold the food and water). I say this because they certainly were not concerned for the survival of the Israelites thereof as they actually sought aid from the Midianites and called upon Balaam to curse them (**Num 22**). They were unnecessarily alarmed of the strength of Israel, and wanted to get them out of the picture despite the fact that Israel did not even pass through Moab, turning eastward to avoid provoking them. IN doing these, both the Ammonites and the Moabites were guilty of not exercising kindness, but in fact displayed mercilessness.

