

The Book of Ruth: God’s sovereignty in redemptive history as revealed in the genealogy of Boaz from Perez to David

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Translation¹

Table 1. Translation of Ruth 4:1-6 with pausal accents and sequence of clauses

Tanakh	English translation	Accent	and clause seq
(א) וַיָּבֹעַז עָלָה הַשַּׁעַר וַיֵּשֶׁב שָׁם	1 And Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there.		1
וַהֲזָה הַגָּאֵל עִבְרַל אֲשֶׁר דָּבַר-בְּעֵזוֹ	Behold, the [nearer] kinsman whom Boaz spoke of was passing by.		2
וַיֹּאמֶר סוּרָה שָׁבָה-פֹּה	So, he said, “Come over here, sit down here, certain man.”		3
פָּלְגֵי אֶלְמִי וַיֵּסֶר וַיֵּשֶׁב:	And he went over and [he] sat down.		4
(ב) וַיִּקַּח עֲשָׂרָה אַנְשִׁים מִזְקְנֵי הָעִיר	2 Then he took ten men of the elders of the city,		5
וַיֹּאמֶר שְׁבוּ-פֹה	and said, “Sit down here”.		6
וַיֵּשְׁבוּ:	So, they sat down.		7
(ג) וַיֹּאמֶר לְגֹאֵל הַקְּלֵת הַשָּׂדֶה אֲשֶׁר לְאָחִינוּ לְאֵלְמֵלֵךְ	3 Then he said to the kinsman redeemer, “A particular named field, which belonged to our brother Elimelech,		8
מִקְרָה נָעֳמִי	Naomi has decided to sell, who had come back from the		9
			10
			11

¹ Source: Ruth 4:1-6 from Herzog, College. *The Tanakh: Ruth*. n.d. <https://www.hatanakh.com/en/tanach/30.0.0?tanachLang=2> (accessed 12 August 2023).

הַשָּׂבָה מְשֻׁדָּה מוֹאָב:	open country of Moab.		
(ד) וְאֲנִי אֶמְרָתִי אֶגְלֶה אֲזַנֶּנְךָ לְאָמֵר קְנֵה נְגִד הַיִּשְׁבִּים וְגִגְד זְקֵנֵי עַמִּי אִם־תִּגְאֹל גְּאֹל	4 So, I thought to uncover in your hearing,” [saying,] ‘Acquire before those who are sitting and before the elders of my people.		12
וְאִם־לֹא יִגְאֹל הַיְגִידָה לִי	But if no one will redeem , tell me that I may know for there is no one, but you to redeem .		13
וְאִדַּע [וְאִדַּעְהָ] כִּי אֲזַן זֹלָתְךָ לְגְאֹל וְאֲנֹכִי אֶחְרָדָה וְיֹאמֶר אֲנֹכִי אֶגְאֹל:	And I am [next] after you.’ And he [nearer kinsman] said, ‘I will redeem.’		14
(ה) וְיֹאמֶר בֹּעַז בְּיוֹם־קְנוֹתֶיךָ הַשְּׂדֵה מִיַּד נְעָמִי וּמֵאֵת רוּת הַמוֹאֲבִיָּה אֲשֶׁת־הַמֵּת קִנְיֹתִי [קְנִיתֶיהָ] לְהִקִּים שֵׁם־הַמֵּת עַל־נַחֲלָתוֹ:	5 And Boaz said, “On the day you acquire the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on behalf of his inheritance.”		18
(ו) וְיֹאמֶר הַגְּאֹל לֹא אֹכֵל לְגְאֹל־ לִי [לְגְאֹל־] פְּרוֹאֲשָׁחִית אֶת־נַחֲלָתִי גְאֹל־לְךָ אֶתְהָ אֶת־ גְאֹלִי כִּי לֹא־אֹכֵל לְגְאֹל:	6 The nearer kinsman said, “I am unable to redeem [it] for myself lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem [it] for yourself my right of redemption for I am unable to redeem .”		19
			20
			21
			22
			23
			24
			25
			26

Holladay is consulted for vowel pointing.² A synthesis of Barrick,

² William L. Holladay, *A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1971), 52 and 194. In the phrase מְכַרָּה נְעָמִי in the BHS (Ruth 4:3), מְכַרָּה is the *Qal* perfect 3fs. It is translated as “Naomi has decided to sell” rather than “Naomi sold” to indicate the land has not changed hands until Boaz bought it later (Ruth 4:9). But מְכַרָּה is not found in Holladay (194). In the phrase לִי לְגְאֹל־ (Ruth 4:6), the verb לְגְאֹל־ is a *Qal* infinitive construct that can be rendered as לְגְאֹל־ (Holladay, 52) or as per [לְגְאֹל־].

Putnam, and Scott divides and orders the clauses at three levels of disjunctive accents—highest level (| | |), intermediate level (| |), and lowest level (|).³

Introduction

The book of Ruth is often studied for its themes of loyalty, faithfulness, and redemption. As a unique book named after a woman, it is also valued for its literary style as a happy love story.⁴ But what is the author's original intention? This paper expositis that Ruth draws attention to God's sovereignty in redemptive history as revealed in the genealogy of Boaz from Perez to David.

Literary

The author of Ruth employs the primary literary device, *inclusio*, to develop a short story about Elimelech, Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz in a prose narrative.⁵ Likely based on an account of Naomi, the author narrated Ruth with his knowledge of the patriarchal history of the Torah, Joshua, and Judges from Jacob to Judah to David.⁶ Ruth also connects Judges to 1 Samuel in the first

The latter translates the phrase as "I am unable to redeem [it] for myself".

- ³ William D. Barrick, *Hebrew Accents in Translation and Interpretation*, July 7, 2004, <https://drbarrick.org/files/papers/other/HebrewAccentsrev.pdf> (accessed August 29, 2023), 1; Frederic Clarke Putnam, *Hebrew Bible Insert: A Student's Guide to the Syntax of Biblical Hebrew* (Quakertown, Penn.: Stylus Publications, 1996), 51-52; William R. Scott, *A Simplified Guide to BHS: Critical Apparatus, Masora, Accents, Unusual Letters & Other Markings*, 3rd ed. (N. Richland Hills, Tex.: BIBAL Press, 1995), 25-35.
- ⁴ Leyland Ryken, *A Complete Handbook of Literary Forms in the Bible* (Wheaton, Illinois: Crossway, 2014), 119/217.
- ⁵ Ronald L. Giese Jr., "Literary Forms of the Old Testament," in *Cracking Old Testament Codes: A Guide to Interpreting the Literary Genres of the Old Testament*, edited by D. Brent Sandy and Ronald L. Giese, Jr. (Nashville, Tenn: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1995.), 18; Ryken, *Literary Forms*, 82/217. Ryken calls *inclusio* the envelope structure.
- ⁶ Zondervan Academic, Blog, *Who Wrote the Book of Ruth?* 14 May 2020, <https://zondervanacademic.com/blog/who-wrote-ruth> (accessed 1

half of Israel's history of the judges and two kings, Saul and David.

Theme and Outline

A secondary literary device in Ruth is the *chiasmus*. It weaves the subplots of a story in reverse structure. Here, the *chiasmus* is summarised from long units of text. It is thus debatable to attribute it to the author.⁷

For teaching purposes, however, the *chiasmus* is helpful to structure the outline in a linear story which climaxes at the crossover, E and E' (Table 2).⁸ Thereafter, the story draws to a positive conclusion about redemption, but with a final twist in a genealogy that seems out of place (Ruth 4:18-22). When Ruth 4:18-22 is linked back to Ruth 1:1-5, it becomes evident that A and A' are the specific *inclusio* device.

In Ruth, the *inclusio* pivots to the book's primary theme. Ruth encourages the audience to celebrate God's sovereignty in keeping His redemptive plan on track. His sovereign plan culminates in the providence of a son, Obed, born to Boaz and Ruth, thereby restoring the genealogy from Perez to David. This exegetical proposition of Ruth extends the local redemption to

November 2023). Only Naomi experienced the entire 10-year journey from Bethlehem to Moab and back to Bethlehem. The Talmud points to Samuel as the author, who knew and anointed David as King (1 Samuel 16:1, 11-13).

⁷ Ryken, *Literary Forms*, 50/217. A *chiasmus* of long passages is subjected to the critique of exaggeration.

⁸ Parker Yamasaki, *Chiasmus: Definition and Examples*. January 31, 2023. <https://www.grammarly.com/blog/chiasmus/> (accessed October 27, 2023). Yamasaki explains, "A Chiasmus is defined as a literary device in which words, grammatical constructions, or concepts are repeated in reverse order. It comes from a Greek word meaning "crossing" or "X-shaped." In practice, chiasmus is when you write a clause and then write a similar clause in reverse." It has three elements – parallel words, inverse structure, and single topic.

the universal redemption through Jesus Christ, a descendant of David (Matthew 1:1, 17).

Table 2. The *chiamus* within the *inclusio* in Ruth

Structure	Main idea	Text
A	The genealogy of Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion ended.	1:1-5
B	Naomi, with Ruth, returned to Bethlehem empty-handed.	1:6-22
C	Ruth met Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer in the clan of Elimelech.	2:1-22
D	Ruth proposed to Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer of the land.	3:1-9
E	Boaz revealed that a nearer kinsman had the first legal right.	3:10-18
X		
E'	Boaz received from the nearer kinsman the transferred legal right.	4:1-6
D'	Boaz bought Ruth to be her kinsman-redeemer of the land.	4:7-12
C'	Ruth married Boaz, the kinsman-redeemer, and they bore a son.	4:13-15
B'	Naomi, through Ruth, was blessed with a son called Obed.	4:16-17
A'	The genealogy of Perez to David via Boaz and Obed was restored.	4:18-22

Note: This *chiasmus* is drawn from large units of text to present the central ideas or statements as the sermon outline.

Contrasts

Contrast is another literary device which the author expertly applied to engage the audience. Listed below are the significant contrasts that drive the consistent story of redemption forward to a conclusion:

1. Famine vs Bethlehem, the House of Bread.
2. National sin of idolatry vs the Bethlehemites as worshippers of Yahweh.
3. Ruth as a foreigner vs Naomi as a citizen.
4. Hard work in gleaning of leftover grains vs the gift of barley ears.

5. Ruth as a servant vs Boaz as the master.
6. Ruth as a proposer vs Boaz as a kinsman-redeemer.
7. Acquiring Naomi's land vs buying Ruth as a wife.
8. Childlessness of Mahlon with Ruth vs the fruitfulness of Boaz and Ruth.
9. Naomi's initial loss vs Naomi's final gain
10. Short genealogy of Elimelech/Mahlon vs long genealogy of Boaz/Obed from Perez to David.

In summary, the literary styles of Ruth expound the redemptive genealogy so powerfully that the patriarchal line becomes the Messianic backbone of God's redemption plan. Ruth is a perfect and inspired literary work beyond the basic themes of loyalty, faithfulness, and romance. It celebrates God's sovereignty and providence in a short story that tells a long story of God's suffering with His covenantal people from Abraham to the church age.

Context

The short story of Ruth was set during a famine in the days of the judges (Ruth 1:1). National famine was the curse of Israel's idolatry, which led to the Babylonian exile (Leviticus 26; Deuteronomy 28). The national famine stimulates questions about Elimelech's decision to sojourn in Moab. Did Elimelech also sin through idolatry? Was the family opportunistic to follow food in Moab and later back in Bethlehem? Why did he not trust God to provide in Bethlehem? Why did he leave the Promised Land to sojourn in pagan Moab? These questions form the antithesis addressed in Appendix A.

The following few sections examine the thesis of Elimelech's decision to sojourn in Moab. The thesis covers the theme, names and their meanings in Ruth, the specific period during the judges, and the genetic composition of Boaz to David. Elimelech's Moabite connection is fundamental to the redemption plan of Yahweh through Boaz and Ruth. The

pericope of this paper describes the qualification and role of the kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 4:1-6).

Theme of Redemption

The *inclusio* structure of Ruth focuses the theme on a long genealogy from Jacob (Ruth 4:11) to David (Ruth 4:22). Yahweh kept His promises as the Chief Custodian of this patriarchal, Messianic line that extends to Jesus Christ (Exodus 3:15; Matthew 1:1-2, 17). Elimelech and Mahlon were part of this genealogy until their death. God brought together Ruth and Boaz to restore the inheritance in the names of the deceased by granting them a son, Obed (Ruth 4:9-10, 13). I submit that in protecting the Messianic genealogy, it was not God's plan for Elimelech to remain in Bethlehem.

Names and Their Meanings

Ruth 1:20-21 shows that the meaning of a name reveals the personal life of that person. Naomi means a delightful or sweet disposition that became bitter after she lost her husband and two sons.⁹ To Naomi, God had dealt bitterly with her. She called herself Mara (bitterness) as a widow of the losses. But the Bethlehemites still knew her as Naomi. When Naomi returned with Ruth to Bethlehem, the women were “stirred, moved or excited” in different English translations of *tehom* (תהום). Holladay defined it “in an uproar”, which is used to describe a positive excitement on two other occasions.¹⁰

The above approach requires the meanings of the names in the book of Ruth to be applied consistently to their lives. Elimelech is translated as “My God is King”, meaning a worshipper of

⁹ “Naomi Meaning,” April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Naomi.html> (accessed November 6, 2023).

¹⁰ Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 78. Two other usages of the same verb, תהום (Niphal imperfect *wegatal*), are in 1 Samuel 4:5 in which the people shouted at the arrival of the Ark of the Covenant and in 1 Kings 1:45 in which the city was glad when David was anointed as King.

Yahweh, although he died soon after he arrived in Moab. He sojourned in Moab, intending to return to Bethlehem after the famine was over. It is harsh to suggest he fled, driven by disobedient behaviour. No other data in Ruth indicates anything other than a temporary refuge in Moab from famine. Mahlon means “sickly or great infirmity”, while Chilion means “wasting away, pining or consuming”.¹¹ The early death of Elimelech and his two sons appeared to be related to their sickly condition, like a genetic disorder or non-contagious disease affecting the male line. Poor health also explained Elimelech’s decision to seek a more stable source of food supply for his sons. Despite their extra efforts to secure better nutrition, their sickly sons also had difficulty producing children in their marriages of about 10 years. The names of each member of Elimelech’s family are consistent with their life experiences in following Yahweh.

Next, the names, meanings, and lives were researched more widely from Judah to David for any hint that supports the idolatrous sin of Elimelech.¹² A survey of their names shows

¹¹ “Chilion Meaning,” Abarim Publications, April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Chilion.html> (accessed October 28, 2023); “Mahlon Meaning,” Abarim Publications, April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Mahlon.html> (accessed October 28, 2023).

¹² “Judah Meaning,” Abarim Publications, April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Judah.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); “Perez Meaning,” Abarim Publications, April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Perez.html> (accessed October 31, 2023); “Hezron Meaning,” Abarim Publications. April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Hezron.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); “Ram Meaning,” Abarim Publications. April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Ram.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); “Amminadab Meaning,” Abarim Publications. April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Amminadab.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); “Nahshon Meaning,” April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Nahshon.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); “Salmon Meaning,” April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Salmon.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); “Boaz Meaning,” April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Boaz.html> (accessed November 4, 2023);

that Judah, Nahshon, and David had known flaws, but no record of any of them worshipping idols.

Although Mahlon and Chilion married Moabite women, their wives lived according to the Jewish culture and worshipped Yahweh. After Elimelech and both his sons died, both daughters-in-law wanted to follow Naomi back to Bethlehem. It was Naomi's urging against returning with her that only Orpah went back to her family. In Naomi's mind, a Moabite woman, especially a widow, would have difficulty in finding a Jewish husband, given the divisive episodes between Israel and Moab (Ruth 1:12-13; Deuteronomy 23:3-6). But Naomi relented only

"Obed Meaning," April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Obed.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); "Jesse Meaning," April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/Jesse.html> (accessed November 4, 2023); "David Meaning," April 30, 2023. <https://www.abarim-publications.com/Meaning/David.html> (accessed November 4, 2023). Judah means "Praised" or "Let Him (God) be praised". He was the fourth son of Jacob and Leah and became prominent, ahead of his brothers who had issues (Genesis 29:35; 35:22; 34:25). He did not fulfil his promise to Tamar, who birthed two sons to Judah after he mistaken her as a harlot (Genesis 38:12-26). But he was a worshipper of Yahweh. Perez means "a breach" which describes him being born ahead of his twin brother, Zerah, who withdrew his hand (Genesis 38:27-30). This was an appointment of God rather than him seeking to be the firstborn. Hezron means "enclosure, cluster, or village." No other data is available on his life. Noteworthy is his son Caleb who founded Bethlehem (1 Chronicles 2:18). Ram means "high or exalted." No other data is available on his life. Amminadab means "people of liberality or my kinsman is noble." No other data is available on his life. Nahshon means "serpent, bronze, or oracle". Nahshon was the military leader of Judah in the first census of Israel (Numbers 1:7, 2:3). As the first generation, he died in the wilderness (Numbers 32:11-12). Salmon means "robe man or coat rack". No other data is available on his life except that he married Rahab, likely the harlot of Jericho. He was of the second generation and permitted to enter the Promised Land. Boaz means "in strength or by strength." He is an exceptional godly man with great wealth (Ruth 2:1). Obed means "servant or slave." He was a gift of God to Boaz and Ruth and restored the patriarchal line. Jesse means "my husband or Yah exists". He passed his sons through the selection process in which David was anointed as the successor to King Saul (1 Samuel 16:1-13). David means "beloved, weak, or flowing". He was the first king who ruled the United Kingdom of Israel. He had flaws and committed two huge sins, but he repented readily. He was known to God as "a man after my heart, who will do all My will" (Acts 13:22).

because Ruth genuinely left her family, clung to Naomi, and confessed a covenantal faith to Yahweh. There was grace to foreigners who lived by the covenant of Yahweh, like Ruth and previously, Rahab, the mother of Boaz (Ruth 1:16-17; Joshua 6:25; Matthew 1:5). Later, Isaiah testifies to God's grace to foreigners and eunuchs who are in the covenantal faith with Yahweh (Isaiah 56:1-8). Ruth 2-4 records that Boaz, the men, and the women of Bethlehem applied God's grace with prayers of blessings for both Naomi and Ruth. John MacArthur also expressed a positive view of Elimelech and Naomi.¹³

Specific Famine in the Days of Judges

The days of the judges consist of 12 periods of judges from Othniel to Samuel, interspersed with 8 periods of servitude from Cushan to the Philistines.¹⁴ "A famine in the days of the judges" fits the narrative of Judges 6:1-6 under the Midianites for five reasons:

1. A national famine was the curse of walking after idols, resulting in servitude under a pagan power rather than a godly judge.¹⁵
2. Famine was due to the annual looting of crops and livestock by the Midianites and not drought, which would affect the entire Levant, including Moab.¹⁶

¹³ John MacArthur, *Ruth: Rising from Ruins*. February 13, 2017.

<https://www.gty.org/library/blog/B170213/ruth-rising-from-ruins> (accessed November 4, 2023), last paragraph under the section, Idolatrous Moabites. MacArthur wrote, "His name means, 'My God is king.' That, together with Naomi's faith and character, suggests that he and his family were devout Jews, not careless worldlings. The fact that Elimelech would take his family to Moab is a measure of the famine's frightening severity. The land of Israel was evidently both spiritually and physically parched, and times were desperate."

¹⁴ The chronology of the judges, including the periods of servitudes, is given in Judges 3:8, 11, 14, 30; 4:3; 5:31; 6:1; 8:28; 9:22; 10:2, 3, 8; 12:7, 8, 11, 13-14; 13:1; 1 Samuel 4:18 and 1 Samuel 7:2, 15. This chronology of 450 years is affirmed by Paul (Acts 13:17-20).

¹⁵ When Israel returned to Yahweh under the judges, there was general relief from a long national famine.

¹⁶ As Israel did evil again, God allowed the Midianites to terrorise and drive

3. The southern tribes, Judah and Simeon, located in the south, suffered the heaviest crop losses (Appendix C).
4. The seven years of famine under the Midianites were followed by another three years of famine because Israel continued to mine the soil by planting crops even in the sabbatical year.¹⁷
5. The earlier timeline of the famine period synchronises with the genealogy of Salmon and Rahab, the mother of Boaz, after the conquest of Jericho.¹⁸

After about 10 years in Moab, Elimelech and his sons died. Then, Naomi received news that the Lord was revisiting Judah with food, meaning the crops were producing good harvests again. She returned to Bethlehem with her daughter-in-law, Ruth.

Two Genealogies of Different Genetic Compositions

The genealogy from Judah to David includes four foreign women highlighted in Matthew 1:1-17 (Appendix B.2). Tamar

the Israelites to live in caves and the mountains for seven years (Judges 6:1-6, 10). The Midianites, the Amalekites and people of the east came every year to camp in the land as far as Gaza (Philistia). Located in the south, Judah and Simeon were the first tribes that suffered the most from the incursions (see map in Appendix C.1). They looted Israel's planted crops and livestock (Judges 6:11). Israelites were starved in a famine that lasted consecutively for ten years (Ruth 1:4-6).

¹⁷ Daniel Gregg, *The Scroll of Biblical Chronology and Ancient Near Eastern History*. (Washington Island: Daniel Gregg, 2018), 1361-1354 BC (column 1). In the 10 years of Midian and Gideon between 1360-1350 BC, 1355-1354 BC was a sabbatical year. The sabbatical year was not kept. The planted crops continued to mine the soil without resting the land for one year. The soil was prevented from natural mineralisation during the sabbatical year, which is necessary for improving soil fertility.

¹⁸ Nason, the father of Salmon, was the leader of Judah in the first census (Numbers 2:3-4). Therefore, Salmon, the father of Boaz, was the second generation in the wilderness, allowed to enter the Promised Land and joined the conquest. Salmon married Rahab (Matthew 1:5), likely the harlot of Jericho. From the conquest to the first year of the Midianites, it was 232 years in two generations.

was a Canaanite, as her hometown was in the same Canaanite area before the law prohibiting marriage with a Canaanite woman (Genesis 38:11; Deuteronomy 7:1-7). Rahab was a Canaanite from Jericho (Joshua 2:1).¹⁹ Ruth was a Moabite (Ruth 1:4). All three of these women chose a covenantal relationship with Yahweh and were adopted by their Jewish communities. Although Bathsheba is a Jewish name, she was likely a Hittite like her husband. It appears that Matthew was making a point by highlighting the common foreign origin of the four women in the genealogy from Abraham to Christ.

In this paper, *Rachab* was considered a Canaanite. Starting from Salmon with Rahab as a Canaanite, their son Boaz was 50% Jewish and 50% Canaanite. Through Boaz and Ruth, Obed was 25% Jewish, 25% Canaanite, and 50% Moabite. As Obed married a Jewish woman, their son Jesse was 62.5% Jewish, 12.5% Canaanite, and 25% Moabite. As Jesse also married a Jewish woman, their son David was 81.5% Jewish, 6.25% Canaanite, and 12.5% Moabite.

If Elimelech and his family had remained in Bethlehem and the male line had been kept alive, Mahlon would have married a Jewish wife. His descendants would be 100% Jewish. A pure Jewish male line would be different from the restored genealogy of Boaz and Ruth. In conclusion, God guarded the patriarchal line from Obed to David, making it a unique Messianic genealogy to Christ via Mary through the seed of the Holy Spirit (Luke 3:23-38) and via Joseph through adoption (Matthew 1:1-17).

¹⁹ Rahab, a harlot of Jericho, is Rachab (רַחַב) in Hebrew. The LXX translated Rachab of Jericho as *Paab* in Joshua. *Paab* is also used in Hebrews 11:31 and James 2:25, both refer to the same Rahab of Jericho. However, in Matthew 1:5, Rahab is *Paxáβ*, the spelling is different from the Rahab of Jericho. It is not a copyist error. Therefore, the Rahab in Matthew 1:5 might not be the harlot of Jericho. But Matthew's genealogy calls out these four women (Matthew 1:1, 3, 5, 6) to make a point about foreign women in the Messianic genealogy.

The above thesis highlights that the *inclusio* literary device drives a positive interpretation of Elimelech's sojourning in Moab. The *inclusio* frames the story of redemption in which Boaz redeemed Ruth to replace the broken genealogy of Elimelech with Boaz's from Perez to David. This restored genealogy becomes the backbone that extends to and stops at Jesus Christ, who is the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer of the world. In the end, God was sovereign and showed His glory in this short story. "My God is King" continues to resonate throughout history in God's people redeemed by Christ, the Messiah and coming King.

The Pericope

The pericope is Ruth 4:1-6, unit E' in the *chiamus* structure, in which the nearer kinsman gave up the legal right on hearing that acquiring Naomi's land was conditional on marrying Ruth (Table 2). Back in the previous unit E, Boaz revealed that there was a nearer kinsman than him. He also promised Ruth that he would settle the matter with him in the morning. In unit E', the six verses are about Boaz's mission in five acts and one outcome (Table 3). The author engages the audience in a sequential narrative that moves the dialogue among the leading actors forward.²⁰

Boaz resolved the matter with the nearer kinsman in the presence of the 10 elders and witnesses at the Bethlehem gate. The nearer kinsman rejected the first right of redemption and passed his legal right by giving one of his sandals to Boaz. Boaz was willing and became the legal kinsman-redeemer.

Ruth 4:1-6 reveals the qualification and role of the kinsman-redeemer. Two criteria qualify a kinsman to be the redeemer. First, he must be the living and closest blood relative to the

²⁰ Ruth 4:1-6 contains 41% narrative and 59% dialogue clauses. The first two verses contain six of the nine narrative clauses, while verses 3-6 have 12 of the 13 dialogue clauses (Table 1).

deceased (Ruth 3:12). Second, he must be willing to restore the inheritance of the deceased by giving up his own (Ruth 4:5-6).

Table 3. Main point of the verses with key words in bold in Ruth 4:1-6

Verse	Main point	Subject	Object
1	Boaz got the nearer kinsman to sit down at the gate	Boaz	Kinsman
2	Boaz got 10 elders to sit down at the gate	Boaz	Elders
3	Boaz revealed Naomi's resolve to sell the land	Boaz	Kinsman
4	Boaz reminded the kinsman of his first right to redeem	Boaz	Kinsman
5	Boaz added acquiring Ruth to continue Mahlon's name	Boaz	Kinsman
6	Nearer kinsman passed the right to redeem to Boaz	Kinsman	Boaz

As the closest and willing blood relative, the kinsman-redeemer has the legal right to perform the redemption in two steps. The first step is to repurchase the land from the deceased (Ruth 4:3-4). The second step is to acquire the deceased's wife as his own wife and to produce a son with her to continue the name of the deceased (Ruth 4:5). In the context of Naomi who lost her husband, Elimelech, and Ruth, who lost her husband, Mahlon, Boaz repurchased the land from Naomi who represented Elimelech (Ruth 4:9). Then, Boaz also married Ruth who represented Mahlon in the family tree (Ruth 4:10). Boaz, therefore, redeemed Naomi's land to continue the inheritance in the name of Mahlon through the marriage with Ruth. The

living patriarchal line, however, shifted from Elimelech/Mahlon to Boaz/Obed.

Application to the Local Audience

This story was well-known in Bethlehem after Boaz made it a public legal process (Ruth 4:1-12). The book of Ruth was read in the synagogues at the Feast of Pentecost throughout history after the Tanakh was canonised. The witnesses not only approved but also prayed for (1) Ruth to be like Rachel and Leah, who both built the 12 tribes of Israel, (2) Boaz to be excellent and well-known in Bethlehem Ephrathah, and (3) Boaz's house to have a son like Perez's house born to Tamar and Judah (Ruth 4:11-12).

The women blessed Yahweh and prayed for (1) Obed's name to be proclaimed in Israel, (2) Obed to restore and sustain Naomi's soul until old age, and (3) Ruth's love for Naomi would be better than seven sons (Ruth 4:14-15). The locals celebrated the restoration of Naomi and the patriarchal line.

Ruin

Naomi was a loving mother-in-law who placed the best interests first for Ruth (Ruth 1:12-13; 3:1-4). Ruth was a faithful daughter-in-law who demonstrated exceptional fidelity to Naomi and Yahweh (Ruth 1:16-17; 3:5).

On reading Ruth, one cannot help but feel empathy for Naomi and Ruth—widows with an uncertain future—after their return to Bethlehem. Naomi tasted bitterness and could not see how God was working for her through Ruth. When Ruth meets Boaz, the reader cheers and anticipates the coming together of this contrasting couple—a converted, poor Moabite woman of exceptional fidelity and a rich Jewish native of godly stature. In the agrarian backdrop of the ugly, evil, and bad famine that plagued the nation of Israel, Ruth presents the goodness of godly people in Bethlehem. Unlike the twists and turns in a long-drawn-out and convoluted plot of modern romance

dramas, Ruth presents a straightforward and realistic biblical love and marriage, demonstrated by sacrifices in both parties.

Redemption

Such a perfect redemptive story is only possible through the providence of a sovereign God. Through Boaz and Ruth, God kept His covenantal promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob (Exodus 2:24) and continued His covenant to David.

The single most important verb in the pericope is *gaal* (גָּאַל), all are found in verses 4 and 6 (Table 4). “He redeemed” (*gaal*, גָּאַל) means he performed the “duty of the male relative of someone who has died, leaving a childless widow to deliver her from childlessness by marriage, the man in question being called *goel* deliverer (Ruth 2:20).”²¹

Gaal is followed by a transitive verb *qana* (קָנָה) in the simple *Qal* stem (Table 4). Two meanings of *qana* in the two steps of redemption are “acquire a field or a servant” (Ruth 4:4, 9) and “specifically buy as a wife (Ruth 4:5, 10).”²² *Gaal* and *qana* are paired, respectively, as the qualification and role of the kinsman-redeemer to complete the legal transaction.

Application to the OT and NT Audience

In the setting of ancient Israel, Boaz’s redemption of Ruth was obedience to the inheritance law written in the Torah. To the wider audience from the OT to NT, the qualification and role of the kinsman-redeemer in the example of Boaz is a foreshadowing of the promise with God as the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ.²³

²¹ Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 52.

²² Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 320.

²³ Ryken, *Literary Forms*, 97-98. This is a special case in which the foreshadowing in the OT points forward to fulfilment in the NT.

Table 4. Key verb type and occurrence in Ruth 4:1-6

Root	Meaning	Mentions (#) and verb type	Total mentions (#)	Mentions verse (#)					
				1	2	3	4	5	6
Gaal	Redeem	3i, 2v, 3c	6				5		3
Qana	Acquire	1q, 1v, 1c	3				1	2	

Note: Each verb is abbreviated as q=*qatal*, i=*yaqtol*, w=*wayyaqtol*, v=imperative, a=infinite absolute, and c=infinite construct. The numeral preceding the abbreviation indicates the number of mentions.

Regulations

Boaz was a godly man par excellence (Ruth 2:1, 4). In the pericope, he set up a local court judgment involving the nearer kinsman and 10 elders and settled the legal transaction he promised Ruth the night before. He followed all the legal requirements stated in the Mosaic law in redeeming Naomi's land (Numbers 27:7; Leviticus 25:25). Boaz also redeemed Ruth in the role of the kinsman-redeemer through marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5). Their son Obed continued the name of Mahlon and Elimelech (Deuteronomy 25:6). By satisfying all the inheritance law, Ruth did not need to go up to the gate, pull the sandal off, and spit on the face of the nearer kinsman (Deuteronomy 25:7-10). By accepting the right of redemption from the nearer kinsman, Boaz also protected him and his identity in history.

This legal, peaceful process of settlement was only possible because of Naomi's proactive plan, which Ruth courageously adopted and proposed to Boaz at his feet on the threshing floor the night before. Leading up to the proposal, Ruth worked for Boaz from the beginning of the barley harvest in early April (Ruth 1:22) to the end of the wheat harvest at the end of June (Ruth 2:23). They had opportunities to talk and observe each other for about two months. There was attraction and liking for each other. Knowing that Boaz, being much older, might not be able to propose first, Ruth readily followed Naomi's plan as the proposer at the threshing floor. She wanted Boaz to care for her by acquiring Naomi's land. It is also not a surprise that Boaz readily accepted the proposal. Boaz's redemption act points to the perfect plan and providence of God, who guided them as His chosen couple. This is the only recorded case of a practical fulfilment of the inheritance law in the Bible.

Rescue

Gaal has its origin in Exodus, in which Yahweh delivered and redeemed Israel out of bondage עֲבָדָה (*avoda*) in Egypt (Exodus 6:6). Therefore, redemption and bondage are opposites of each other, like liberty and servitude in the period of the judges. Just as God's redemption made Israel His own possession (Exodus 19:5), Boaz's redemption of Ruth kicked off a chain of redemptive acts of God. From Obed and Jesse came King David, who delivered Israel from the proclivity for idol worship under the judges. While a king of enduring power appeared to be emphasised over a judge of limited power (Judges 17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25), a good king did not live forever (1 Chronicles 29:28-30). God extended the genealogy from David to end in Jesus Christ, who is the final good King forever. Christ's ultimate redemption of mankind from the Fall makes Christians His own possession as sons (Ephesians 1:14; Romans 8:15; Galatians 4:5).

Gaal (גַּאֵל) is used progressively in the OT with 66% of all

applications in Leviticus, Ruth, and Isaiah combined (Table 5).²⁴ The Qal stem of a simple active verb is concentrated in these three books. The *Niphal* stem of the simple passive verb and the noun גּוּלִים (*g'ulla* or plural *g'ulim*) are predominant in Leviticus 25 and 27. These chapters instruct the Israelites in the fairness of land purchase and repurchase in redemption within a cycle of Jubilee, when the land will be returned to the owner. Boaz followed these instructions as the kinsman redeemer of Ruth. *Gaal* in Leviticus became the basis for Naomi to request Ruth to propose to Boaz as her kinsman redeemer.

Table 5. Profile of the application of *gaal* in the OT books

Book	Qal	Niphal	Kinsman redeemer Goel	Redemption G'ulla/ G'ulim	Total (#)
Leviticus	13	7	2	9	31
Ruth	12	0	9	2	23
Isaiah	9	1	13	1	24
Lv. + Ru. + Is. (#)	34	8	24	12	78
All other books (#)	17	0	20	3	40
OT total (#)	51	8	44	15	118
Lv. + Ru. + Is. (%)^a	67%	100%	55%	80%	66%

Source: Extracted from Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, ed. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 400.

^a Each of the four applications of *gaal* predominates in Leviticus (Lv.), Ruth (Ru.) and Isaiah (Is.) combined.

This lexical understanding extends to God, the ultimate

²⁴ Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, ed. *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament*. Translated by Mark E. Biddle. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1997), 400.

Kinsman-Redeemer (Isaiah 54:5). The forward genealogy of Perez to David ended in Jesus Christ who qualifies as the blood relative of all descendants of Adam (Luke 3:38). He is the Son of God (Mark 1:1) and willing to be the Kinsman-Redeemer in flesh (John 1:14). He gave up His position as the Son of God temporally to redeem all men from sins to the promised eternal inheritance (Hebrews 9:15).

A Timeless Truth for the Universal Audience

Ruth 4:1-6 defines the qualification and role of the kinsman-redeemer, exemplified by Boaz. He became the nearest blood relative and was willing to be the kinsman-redeemer. He paid a price for the land and Ruth. Boaz is the foreshadowing of the ultimate Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Jesus was willing and born as a man, a descendant of Adam, a blood relative of all men. He paid a price that required His death and shed blood to redeem man from the bondage of sin. This becomes the good news: “22 For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ all will be made alive.” (1 Corinthians 15:22 [LSB]).

Before the Foundation of the World

What makes redemption a timeless truth is that “He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we would be holy and blameless before Him in love” (Ephesians 1:4). “Before the foundation of the world” means the redemptive blueprint of God was with Christ even before the creation of man. The corruption of creation through the Fall kicked off the redemptive plan through the seed of a woman (Genesis 3:15). It is a veiled prophecy fulfilled about 4000 years later in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

A Long Messianic Genealogy in a Short Story

The *inclusio* device in Ruth frames a 10-year history of Elimelech, Naomi, Chilion and Mahlon during the days of the judges from the end of Deborah to the initial years of Gideon. But Boaz’s genealogy encompasses Israel’s history from as early

as Jacob, Judah and Perez in Canaan and Egypt (Genesis 46:8, 12). His great-great-grandson, Nahshon, led Judah in the first census in the second year of the exodus (Numbers 1:7; 2:3). As part of the first generation in the exodus, Nahshon died in the wilderness. His son, Salma (Salmon), was part of the second generation in the conquest of Canaan. The history of Perez to David spans 712 years from an estimated 1805 to 1093 BC. The promise to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was fulfilled in the United Kingdom of Israel under King David. This was superseded by Jesus Christ from 2 BC to AD 34.²⁵ The complete genealogy covers more than 2000 years from Abraham to Christ (Matthew 1:1-17).

Ruth 4:1-6 settled the kinsman-redeemer as Boaz. He married Ruth, and they produced Obed. While Boaz reconnected to Perez and to the first man, Adam, Obed restored the forward genealogy to David and finally to Jesus Christ. In this biblical genealogy, God executed His blueprint to redeem man through real historical people who lived in the real world and time. Elimelech, Naomi, Boaz, and Ruth were not random people in an ad hoc place and time in the universe. The book of Ruth, therefore, is a testimony to the sovereignty of God who jealously guarded the Messianic genealogy until Jesus fulfilled the final and only efficacious redemption of fallen man.

Appendices

A: Did Elimelech Reject Covenantal Faith?

Did Elimelech worship idols? The book of Ruth contains no record, direct or indirect, of Elimelech worshipping idols. His name is “My God is King.” In Ruth, the Bethlehemites worshipped Yahweh. At face value, Elimelech is also a worshipper of Yahweh. To suggest that Elimelech was idolatrous is committing the fallacy of argument from silence.

²⁵ Gregg, *Biblical Chronology*, 34 BC-AD 2.

Was the family opportunistic to follow food in Moab and later back in Bethlehem? Elimelech and Naomi represented a peasant family with a piece of farmland. They had to work hard to feed their household. They had two sickly sons who needed a stable supply of food and nutrition. Their objective was a temporary sojourning when the entire nation was under judgment. Therefore, it is unfair to judge them as opportunistic for seeking the basic needs of food and water to survive.

Why did he not remain in Bethlehem and trust God to provide for His people in the Promised Land? Elimelech could have stayed in Bethlehem. Every household suffered from a national famine. It was a desperate time for him and his family. Lack of faith in miracles does not equate to the rejection of the covenantal faith in Yahweh. Therefore, it was not a sin to seek food elsewhere during a national famine while remaining in the covenantal faith.

Is there a precedent that helps to judge Elimelech's case? There are four cases where famine induced God's people to go to sojourn in neighbouring countries until there was relief. The first case comes from Abram. He followed God and went to Canaan—first to Shechem (Genesis 12:6), second to the mountain east of Bethel (Genesis 12:8), and third to the Negev (Genesis 12:9). Between Shechem and Bethel, God showed the land of Canaan to Abram as a promise for his descendants (Genesis 12:7). The narrative continues in Genesis 12:10 [LSB], "Now there was a famine in the land; so, Abram went down to Egypt to sojourn there, for the famine was severe in the land." When he was close to Egypt, he sinned by deceptively calling Sarai his sister (Genesis 12:11-13). On this deception that led to a huge incident later with Pharaoh, some commentators wrote that Abram should not have gone to Egypt, an idolatrous country. But Abram committed the same sin when he met Abimelech while in Gerar, Canaan (Genesis 20:1-2). So, Abram's fear of man was not dependent on his sojourning in Egypt or Canaan.

The second case involved Joseph's brothers, who went to Egypt to buy grain because of a famine in the Levant and beyond (Genesis 45:1-28). But they ended up living there on the invitation of Pharaoh and Joseph. When another Pharaoh ascended to the throne, he made them slaves until the exodus. Jacob and his descendants remain devout Jews while in Egypt.

In the third case, Elisha advised the Shunamite woman and her household to sojourn anywhere because a seven-year famine was upon Israel (2 Kings 8:1-3). She and her household moved to the neighbouring Philistia, Israel's perennial enemy. They returned to their home and land after seven years. This case is like Elimelech's sojourning in Moab.

The last case is the sojourning of the rebels in Egypt from the sword, famine, and pestilence during the siege of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (Jeremiah 42:18-22). As 430 years of idolatry were up (Ezekiel 4:4-8), God judged Israel and Judah with a 70-year exile to Babylon (Jeremiah 25:10). If they flee, they will die. If they submit to exile, they will live and return to their homeland after the exile (Jeremiah 42:10-12). Here, God had appointed Babylon as the place of exile. It is a different context from the sojourning of Elimelech and the Shunamite woman; both had a choice, and they sojourned in the nearest neighbour to take refuge.

A strong argument for Joseph's brothers and the Shunamite woman is that their sojourning was part of God's plan. This argument also applies to Elimelech. The outcome of his sojourning was the conversion of the Moabitess, Ruth, who became the great-grandmother of David with 12.5 per cent Moabite blood. Without Elimelech's sojourning in Moab, the genealogy of Elimelech would be a different history without Obed, Jesse, and David. This unique Moabite genetics affirms the sovereignty and providence of God, hidden in the genealogy from Perez to David.

Why did he leave Judah to sojourn in Moab, a pagan country?

Moab is well-known for idolatry associated with immorality and is one of the enemies of Israel (Numbers 25:1-5; Deuteronomy 23:3-6). But Ehud subdued Moab before the days of the Midianites (Judges 3:14-15, 30). God used the Midianites to terrorise Israel for their evil, causing a famine. But Moab, predominantly pastoral, was not the target of the raids from the Midianites and Amalekites. Elimelech sojourned in the open country or field (אֲרָצוֹ) of Moab so that they could work for the rural community or continue to grow barley and wheat. Moab was the nearest neighbour across the Dead Sea with a similar climate, soils, and crops, situated away from the direct route of the Midianites (Appendix C.1).

B: Age Ranges of Elimelech and Boaz and their Relationships

The book of Ruth tells a concise and cogent story with minimal data. How the genealogies of Elimelech and Boaz are linked is complex and requires detective work. When the ages of Boaz, Elimelech and their family members are estimated based on evidence in Ruth, it is possible to figure out the linkage point in the two genealogies. A simulation was conducted in an EXCEL spreadsheet to derive the ages of Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, Chilion, Orpah, Ruth and Boaz (Table B.1). This simulation sheet uses formulae to link the time events from the starting ages (in red) that are supported by textual evidence below:

1. The relationships in the extended family tree of Elimelech follow the assumed typical age structure—the male is one to five years older than the female spouse.
2. Boaz was much older, outside the age cohort of the younger men in their 30s, in the age range of 50-70, that is, 20-40 years older than Ruth (Ruth 3:10).
3. As it took time to accumulate wealth, Boaz was senior to Elimelech but at most 10 years older (Ruth 2:1).
4. Naomi's age was outside the natural child-bearing age and older than Ruth's, like a mother's age (Ruth 1:11-13). Naomi, therefore, was a few years younger than

Elimelech.

5. Elimelech and his family were in Moab for about 10 years (Ruth 1:4).
6. The text indicates that Elimelech died in the first year (Ruth 1:2-3) while Mahlon and Chilion died in the tenth year (Ruth 1:4-5) of the sojourning in Moab.

Elimelech and Naomi married in their early 20s, and their sons were born in the next two years. They sojourned to Moab at 50 and 48, respectively. In the first year in Moab, therefore, Mahlon and Chilion were eligible for marriage to Ruth and Orpah, respectively. Ruth was 20 when she married Mahlon. Boaz’s age is dependent only on Elimelech’s age. Boaz was older than Elimelech by a maximum of 10 years in this simulation. At the minimum, he was at the same age as Elimelech (not simulated).

Table B.1. Simulated ages of Boaz and Ruth

Name	Age of the family member and Boaz when...									
	Elimelech married	Sons born	1st year in Moab	Elimelech died	Sons married	10th year in Moab, sons died	1st year, returned to Bethlehem	Ruth met Boaz	Boaz married Ruth	Obed born
Elimelech	22	24	50	50						
Naomi	20	22	48	48	48	58	58	58	58	59
Mahlon		0	26	26	26	36				
Chilion		0	24	24	24	34				
Orpah			22	22	22	32	32	32	32	
Ruth			20	20	20	30	30	30	30	31
Boaz			60	60	60	70	70	70	70	71

Source: Estimated from Ruth 1-4 (see Appendix B for the logic derived from the text).

Here are the results of the simulation (Table B.1). In the 1st year in Moab, Elimelech was in his 50s, Naomi was two years younger, their sons were in their 20s, Ruth was 20, and Boaz was 60 years old at the highest limit. At marriage, Boaz and Ruth set the maximum and minimum age range at 70 and 30 years old, respectively (Figure B.1).

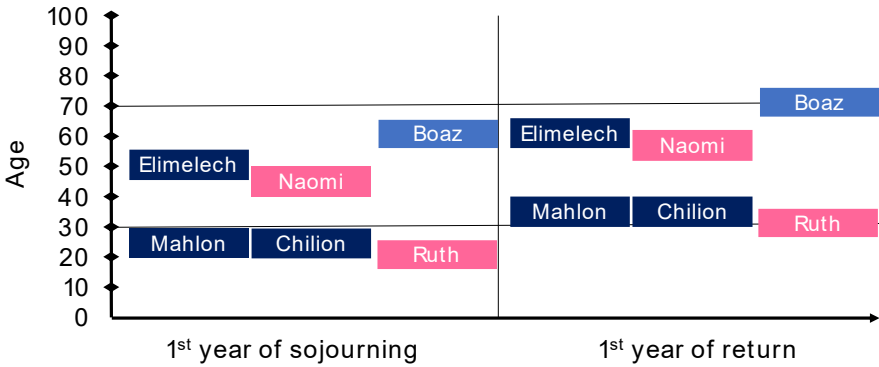


Figure B.1. The estimated age range of Boaz, Elimelech and his family from textual evidence in Ruth

While back in Bethlehem, Naomi told Ruth that Elimelech had a kinsman called Boaz who was an acquaintance (relative) “of the family (*mimmishpachat*, מִמִּשְׁפַּחַת) of Elimelech” (Ruth 2:1; 3:2).²⁶ The root of *mimmishpachat* is *mishpacha* (מִשְׁפָּחָה). Steinberg explains, “The kinship unit immediately above the family household [*bêt ’ab*] was the *mišpāhā*, the clan (or maximal lineage), an enlargement of the *bêt ’ab* to include lineages related by marriage.”²⁷ Holladay’s definition is “extended family, clan (group in which there is a felt blood-relationship).”²⁸ *Mispacha* (מִשְׁפָּחָה) is thus better translated as clan (ESV) than as family (LSB). Above the clan are the tribe, for example, Perez (Ruth 4:12) and the “house” of Israel (Ruth 4:11).

The Elimelech family was *bet ab* because he did not have the extended family of a clan, *mishpacha*. A clan of Elimelech, therefore, refers to his father’s or grandfather’s clan. As Naomi addressed Boaz as an acquaintance (a distant blood relative),

²⁶ Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 129.

²⁷ Steinberg, Naomi A. 2022. *Family, Clan, and Tribe in the Book of Genesis*. Edited by Bill T. Arnold. Vol. The Cambridge Companion to Genesis. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), 170.

²⁸ Holladay, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon*, 221.

the clan was indeed the grandfather, Nashon (Figure B.2). This makes the nearer kinsman a brother and Boaz the first cousin of Elimelech. If the clan were his father, Salmon, then Boaz would be a brother to Elimelech. In the dialogue with the nearer kinsman, Boaz addressed Elimelech as “our brother” (Ruth 4:3) to indicate a common blood relationship among them in the clan of the same generation. “Brother” also refers to the family relationship between the nearer kinsman and Elimelech. But Boaz never used “brother” to address the nearer kinsman, affirming that the nearer kinsman was closer to Elimelech than he was.

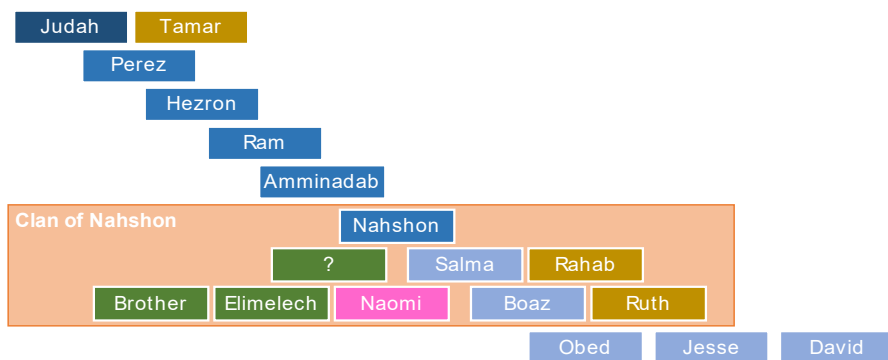


Figure B.2. The relationships of the nearer kinsman and Boaz with Elimelech in their genealogies

Note: In the clan of Nahshon, the nearer kinsman was the brother of Elimelech (green box). Boaz was the 1st cousin, whom Naomi referred to as an acquaintance (light blue box). Matthew’s three foreign women (excluding Bathsheba, as noted in the brown box) are added to the genealogy to calculate the genetic composition from Boaz to David.

Naomi remembered and targeted Boaz as the potential kinsman, for he was an “influential and respected wealthy landowner” (גִּבּוֹר חַיִּל). What she had in mind was the best kinsman-redeemer for Ruth. If Boaz were already 60-70 years old when he married Ruth, he would be too old as an uncle (one generation higher)

or too young as a nephew (one generation lower) of the nearer kinsman and Elimelech.

The genealogy from Perez to David was given in Ruth 4:18-22. Judah was the father of Perez, with the Bethlehemites living in the land of Judah (Figure B.2). By redeeming Ruth, Boaz reconnected the patriarchal line back to Perez. The birth of their son, Obed, restored the patriarchal line forward to David.

C: Map of the 12 Tribes of Israel under the Judges

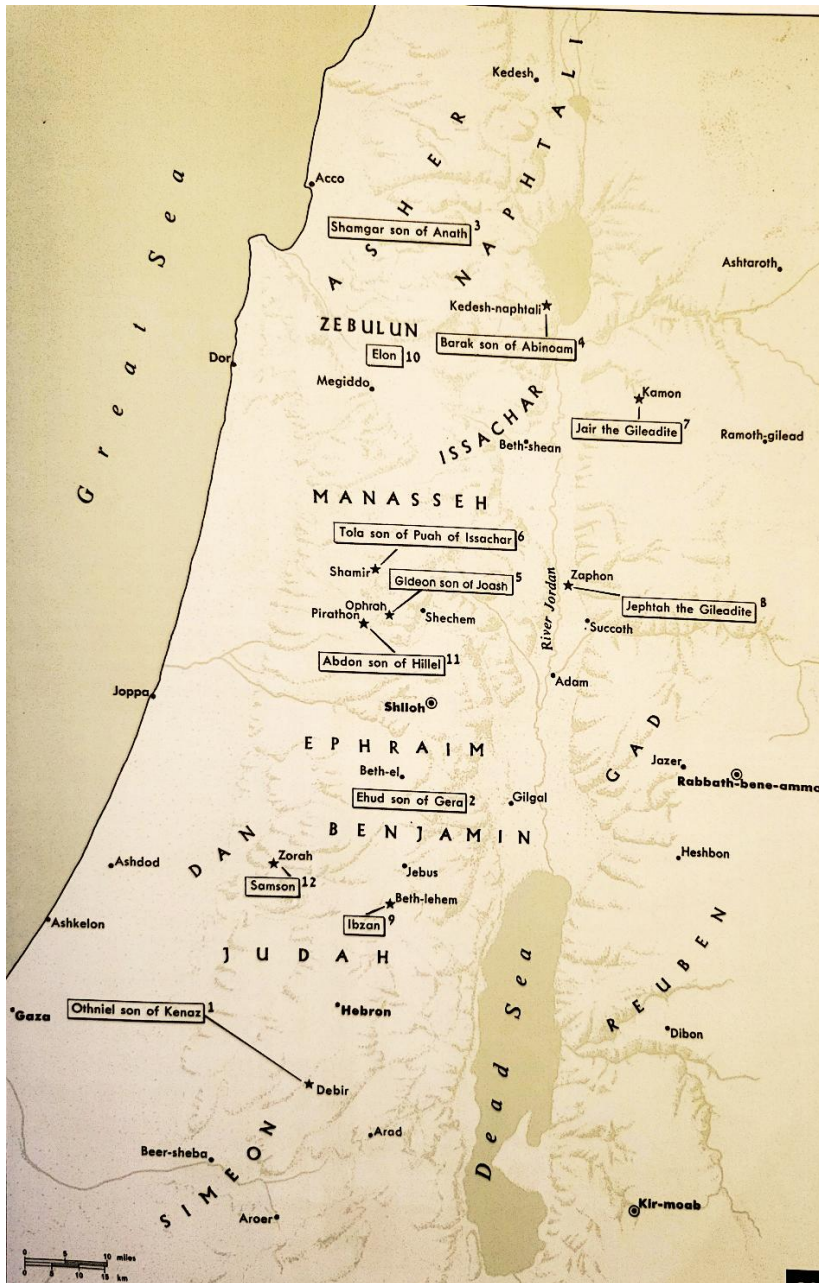


Figure C.1. Map of the 12 Tribes during the Judges 3-18
Source: Yohanan Aharoni et al., Bible Atlas, 71.

Note: As the nomadic Midianites came from northwest Arabia via the southeast and the Amalekites from the southwest, the southern tribes of Judah and Simeon were the first to have their crops and livestock ransacked. Elimelech and his family journeyed to northern Moab via the north, east, and then south directions. Moab was located south of Reuben, and its city was Kir-Moab.

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