

Ruth 4:1-12

Introduction: a legal setting with some tension. Will Naomi's words in 3:18 be fulfilled? Is Boaz a man of character?

Boaz takes the initiative to address the matter appropriately—4:1-6

- 1) Boaz gathers the appropriate parties in the appropriate setting—4:1-2
 - a) The appropriate setting—4:1a
 - b) The appropriate necessary parties
 - i) The anonymous (So-and-So, John Doe, etc.) relative—4:1b
 - (1) Curious way to refer to someone in a chapter filled with names!
 - (2) Note his character and decision making compared with Boaz.
 - ii) Ten elders of the city—4:2
 - (1) How many were required? (cf. Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15)
- 2) Boaz explains the situation—4:3-6
 - a) Boaz acts in Naomi's interests—4:3 (cf. Jeremiah 32:6-12)
 - i) Who will use the land until the year of Jubilee? (cf. Leviticus 25:23-28)
 - b) Boaz acts above reproach—4:4
 - i) He gives the relative the necessary information to make a wise decision
 - ii) He informs the relative of the possible options
 - iii) The close relative indicates his willingness to agree (Oh no!!!)
 - c) Boaz acts prudently—4:5-6
 - i) The close relative excuses himself from the situation (relief).
 - (1) Note he focused on himself and his possessions. Being unable and being unwilling is not always the same thing.

Boaz carefully addresses the matter according to local custom—4:7-12

- 1) The narrator explains the custom—4:7
- 2) The close relative bows out—4:8
- 3) Boaz appeals to the witnesses—4:9
 - a) Regarding possessions—4:9
 - b) Regarding people—4:10
 - i) Boaz himself was the descendent of a Gentile outcast (Matthew 1:5) who had turned in faith to Israel's God (Hebrews 11:31; James 2:25).
- 4) The local residents respond—4:11-12
 - a) They acknowledge their role—"We are witnesses."
 - b) They offer a three-fold prayer/blessing for Boaz
 - i) A fruitful wife—4:11a
 - (1) Rachel and Leah were also non-Jews
 - ii) Prosperity (cf. 2:1) and renown—4:11b
 - iii) An unbroken line of descendants—4:12 (Perez's family settled near Bethlehem (cf. 1st Chronicles 2:5, 18, 50-54)

Take-home truth: Our sovereign God is active in the lives of those who demonstrate loyal-mercy to others.