

Student Study Guide: From Famine to Fullness – The Story of Ruth and the Redeemer

I. Prelude: What Redemption Means

- **Definition:** Redeem = to rescue or take back what was wrongfully taken or lost.
- **Illustration:** A guitar stolen in high school had to be “redeemed” by paying its value to recover it.
- **Biblical Principle:** God rescues what humanity has lost through sin and restores it to His intended purpose.

Scripture: Psalm 24:1 (ESV) – *“The earth is the Lord’s and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein.”*

- Everything belongs to God; sin handed it over to another master.

Example: Exodus – Israelites enslaved in Egypt

- God acts as Redeemer through:
 - Mighty acts
 - Blood of the Passover lamb
 - Restoring them to covenant relationship and the Promised Land
- **Key Insight:** Redemption always involves **rescue + restoration**.

II. Setting the Stage for Ruth

Historical Context

- **Deuteronomy:** Moses prepares a new generation to enter and possess the Promised Land.
- **Why a new generation?** The generation that left Egypt died in the wilderness (Numbers 13). Obedience is required for God’s plan to continue.

Moses’ Three Speeches:

1. **History:** God’s faithfulness in the past.
2. **Covenant Stipulations:** Instructions for holy living.
3. **Blessing and Cursing:** Consequences of obedience or disobedience.

Scripture: Deuteronomy 8:10–19 (ESV) – God warns against forgetting Him when life becomes comfortable.

- **Key Insight:** Don’t let comfort become your collapse.

Deuteronomy 28 – Blessings and Curses

- **Blessings:** Obedience brings abundance (28:1–2).
 - **Curses:** Disobedience brings famine and devastation (28:15, 28:23–24).
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Transition: Judges and Israel’s Unfaithfulness

- **Scripture:** Judges 21:25 (ESV) – *“In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes.”*
 - **Effect:** Israel’s unfaithfulness leads to famine, instability, and moral confusion.
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III. Ruth: Faithfulness in the Midst of Famine

Scripture: Ruth 1:1–5 (ESV) – Elimelech, Naomi, and her sons go to Moab during famine; all men die.

- **Key Idea:** Bethlehem, “House of Bread,” now has no bread.

Faithfulness Finds Favor

- Faithfulness is a fruit of the Spirit.
 - **Scripture:** Ruth 1:16–17 (ESV) – Ruth pledges loyalty to Naomi and her God.
 - **Insight:** Faithfulness leads to God’s favor and blessing.
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IV. Naomi and Ruth: Vulnerable but Faithful

- **Context:** Without male protection, widows had no security or inheritance.
- **Solution:** A **kinsman-redeemer (go'el)** restores lost family and property.

Scripture: Ruth 2:8–12 (ESV) – Boaz notices Ruth’s faithfulness, provides protection, and blesses her.

- **Key Idea:** God shows favor to the faithful, providing protection, provision, and restoration.
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V. Ruth and Boaz: Redemption in Action

1. **Ruth 3:** Ruth approaches Boaz as a redeemer.
 2. **Ruth 4:9–10 (ESV):** Boaz redeems Naomi’s family, marrying Ruth, restoring inheritance, and continuing the family line.
- **Key Idea:** Redemption restores what was lost.
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VI. Redemption: A Picture of Christ

- Humanity was lost to sin; Jesus is the ultimate Redeemer.

Scriptures:

- **Ephesians 1:7 (ESV):** Redemption through Christ’s blood.
- **Ephesians 2:13–14 (ESV):** Jesus brings Jew and Gentile together, breaking down barriers.

Ruth 4:13–17 (ESV): Ruth and Boaz have Obed, who becomes Jesse’s father, then David.

Matthew 1:5–6 (ESV): Boaz and Ruth are in Jesus’ genealogy.

Key Insight: Faithfulness of an outsider (Ruth) and redemption by Boaz point to Christ's work for all humanity.

VII. Key Takeaways

1. **Redeem = rescue + restoration**
2. **God's faithfulness never fails**, even when people fail.
3. **Naomi moves from emptiness to fullness** through God's provision.
4. **Faithful obedience matters:** Ruth demonstrates this; God uses faithful people in His plan.
5. **Boaz points to Christ**, the ultimate Redeemer who restores, rescues, and includes all nations.

Bottom Line: Jesus is the Redeemer who rescues what was lost and brings all people into God's family.