

Know the God of Scripture

Volume 1

Week 12: The Kinsman-Redeemer - Answer Guide

Below is the answer guide for this week's lesson. By no means are the answers complete or the only possible responses to each question. They are a guide to fully understanding the intent of the questions posed.

1. Names in Hebrew usually are significant in historical narrative. In Hebrew Elimelech means “my God is king,” Naomi means “pleasant or lovely,” Mahlon means “sick” and Chilion means “suffering or torture.” Due to Elimelech’s name, one can surmise he was either a devout Jew or a priest of some kind. Both Mahlon and Chilion died young leaving their widows in the care of their mother Naomi.

An Ephrathite is an inhabitant of Ephrath or Bethlehem (Genesis 35:19).

Elimelech was a kinsman of Boaz (Ruth 3:12) and descendant of Judah which is the same tribe King David belonged to, and ultimately, Jesus descended from. As you will discover, preserving the lineage of Jesus throughout the Old Testament is an underlying and important theme.

2. Ruth means “friendship” in Hebrew. Orpah is harder to interpret but some scholars believe it means “stiff-necked or back of the neck.” As we will discover soon, Jesus descended from Naomi and Ruth, a pleasant, lovely and friendly lineage.

Moab was the son of Lot’s firstborn daughter whose descendents settled in the land east of the Dead Sea. Although intermarriage to Moabites was not specifically banned, they were not allowed in the assembly of the Israelites. They were non-Jew Gentiles considered to be unclean.

3. Boaz followed the law and allowed the poor to glean his fields after the harvesters had reaped it. He blessed his workers and he showed undeserved generosity to Ruth and others. He seems to be a man who is loyal to the ways of Yahweh. In the end he did what was right in redeeming Ruth to continue the family name. Boaz shows remarkable generosity to a foreigner (Deuteronomy 24:19). Boaz, in Hebrew, means “In Him is Strength.” In Boaz we see a picture of Christ

4. Naomi in Hebrew means “pleasant” or “lovely,” Mara in Hebrew means “bitter.” Usually when God changes the name of a servant there is a divine reason. Here Naomi changes her own name to reflect her current mental condition.

5. A male relative who, according to the Torah, was responsible to save a fellow relative from danger and harm or buy out of slavery (Genesis 48:16; Leviticus 25:47-55). In Jewish culture, the familial unit was of utmost importance. To protect and preserve the family name was paramount. Boaz was a relative of Naomi’s husband, Elimelech (2:1), who, when discovered, had this responsibility. A kinsman-redeemer is a vivid picture of Jesus who ransomed His body to redeem, or buy back from the bondage of sin and death, the elect.

6. Bethlehem in Hebrew means “house of bread.” After famine God provides for His people in Bethlehem (1:6). In this same area Ruth and Naomi return, Ruth to glean the fields of barley and Naomi to redeem her husband’s fields. Ruth is proposed to on a threshing floor where the grain provided is separated from the chaff. The story begins in famine, but God provides physical bread and spiritual bread through the birth of Obed preserving the lineage of Jesus, the Bread of life. It is also the birthplace of the Messiah.

7. In Matthew 13:44 Jesus said the Kingdom of heaven is like a treasure buried in a field and bought with the founder's life savings. In Jesus' story the founder recognized the enormous value of the treasure (Christ) so much that he sacrificed everything he had to purchase it.

In similar fashion Boaz recognized the treasure (Ruth) was part of the deal in purchasing the field. Boaz may not have completely known the treasure which he preserved, but the true treasure (Jesus) came from the consummated marriage of Boaz and Ruth.

8. Answers will vary but make sure to touch on the two literary bookends which encapsulate the ironic contrasts embedded in the middle. Discuss the interplay between God's purpose (His providence) and human choice. Link to video: <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/ruth/>

9. Matthew 1:3-6

“Judah begot Perez ... of Tamar” (1:3)
“Salmon begot Boaz of Rahab” (1:5)
“Boaz begot Obed of Ruth” (1:5)
“David, the king, begot Solomon of her that had been the wife of Uriah” (1:6)

Ruth 4:18-22

“Perez” (4:18)
“Salmon” (4:20)
“Boaz” (4:21)
“David” (4:22)

All four of these statements have an element of the four women in Jesus' genealogy, Tamar, Rahab, Ruth & Bathsheba. The purpose of Ruth's genealogy is to show the lineage of David from the tribe of Judah

10. The book of Ruth became one of five books called the Hamesh Megilloth (Five Scrolls) read at various Jewish festivals. Ruth was read during the Feast of Weeks. The others were Song of Songs, read at Feast of Passover, Lamentations on the 9th of Ab, Ecclesiastes at the Feast of Booths and Esther at Purim.

11. Answers may vary based on personal experience but might include if someone is struggling with God, cannot see God in their life or have recently felt abandoned by God. Emphasize that God is everywhere all the time (omnipresent) and loves them more than they can comprehend. His will is provident and they play a major role in it. God cannot steer a ship that is not moving. Rest in His sovereignty and have faith that He is working. Throughout Ruth, God is working behind the scenes demonstrating His providence over nature, time and man.

Additional Questions:

1. Answers will vary depending on personal experience.
2. Answers will vary depending on personal experience.

Ruth demonstrated unparalleled humility by gleaning the fields without complaining and obeying her mother-in-law's instructions.

3. Although her origin is from Moab, Ruth married an Israelite and probably became familiar with the Jewish customs and culture. When she followed Naomi to Bethlehem, she demonstrated a committed loyalty to her not only in obeying Naomi, but trusting in her decisions, many of which put her in uncompromising positions.

4. Later, when we read and study Matthew, you will discover that Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience in an attempt to convince them that Jesus was the Messiah foretold in the Old Testament. Over the years many theologians have come up with reasons why Matthew would include women in Jesus' genealogy. One reason could be that he was showing the hand of God in preserving the lineage of His Son. Each of these women were touched by the providence of God in order to have offspring in Christ's lineage. Do your own study and see what other theologians have to say about this.

