

Boaz and Ruth

A Love Story and a Prophecy

The setting for this story is the vicinity of Bethlehem. The time is during the period that the Judges judged Israel, following the conquering of the Promised Land and prior to the transition to rulership by kings. The general theme of the story is Victory: from famine to plenty – from despair to hope – from desolation to marriage and parenthood.

The six principal characters of the story are: Elimelech, Naomi, Ruth, Orpah, Boaz, and the Nearer Kinsman.

The meaning of the names is important to the theme of the story. The first two characters are Elimelech and his wife Naomi. The name Elimelech means “*God is King,*” and obviously represents God in the greater story that is being told through this simple ancient love story. Elimelech is married to Naomi, who represents Israel. Her name means “*pleasant.*”

The Gematria of their names is highly significant. The name Elimelech has a number value of 131 and the name Naomi has a number value of 170. Put them together in a marriage union and the total of their two names has a value of 301. This marriage of God to Israel took place at Sinai – the Mount of God. Appropriately, the Gematria for “*The Mount of God*” is 301. That was the place where the marriage was sealed with Israel’s promise that she would be faithful to the covenant. However, she was unfaithful, and thus a divorce took place at Calvary 1,480 years later, when Jesus said “*It is finished.*” Amazingly the name “*Calvary*” also has a Gematria value of 301. At that time Israel (represented by Naomi) was left without a husband, protector, provider. Thus, in the story, Elimelech dies. Not that God dies, but rather that Naomi ceased from having a husband. She was left desolate.

There are other interesting uses of the number 301 in the scriptures. One of these is the Nearer Kinsman in the story of Ruth. He was never called by name in the story, but was referred to as “*such a one,*” and it has a Gematria value of 301. But we will talk about the Nearer Kinsman later in this study. Other uses of this number also apply to God. In Deuteronomy 32:4 it is said “*He is the Rock,*” and it adds to 301.

Two important characters in the story are Ruth and Orpah. They were not sisters, but sisters-in-law, having married the two sons of Naomi. After the death of their husbands (Naomi’s two sons), both of them planned to accompany Naomi back to the land of Israel. However, when they got out on the road that would lead them to Bethlehem, Naomi suggested that they return to their own mothers. Orpah decided to return, but Ruth pledged her love for Naomi and said she would never leave her. So Orpah turned back and returned to her own people and to her own mother’s house. Ruth went with Naomi on the lonely and desolate road and endured all the hardships involved, daily demonstrating her love and faithfulness; and when they returned to Bethlehem it was Ruth who found sustenance for them by gleaning in the field of Boaz. By this means, she was able to support her mother-in-law.

It appears that these two daughters-in-law of Naomi represent two churches – Ruth would represent the true church, who love and support Israel, and Orpah would represent the false church who, down through the centuries, have hated Israel and have neglected her needs, and have even made war with her (the Crusades for instance). It is a known fact that both Catholicism and Protestantism have rejected Israel. It is only in very recent years that any kind of

reconciliation has been even given show. The true church, on the other hand, is not known by any demoninational name or creed, but consists of individuals who have dedicated their hearts and lives to the service of God and His people. These are represented by Ruth.

The name Ruth means “a friend.” And that is truly what she was to Naomi. The name has a Gematria value of 606, indicating that those represented by Ruth are from earthly origins – the number 6 representing man and the earth. She was called, in the narrative, The Moabitess, which has a Gematria value of 69. Her union with Boaz would change the number to 148.

69 = The Moabitess

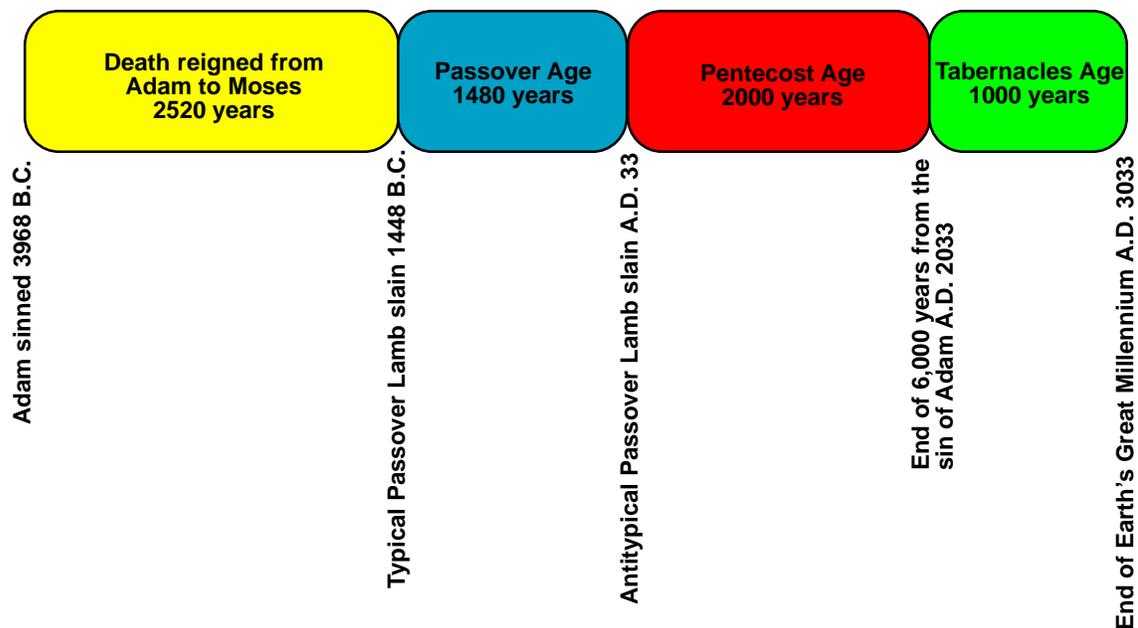
79 = Boaz

148

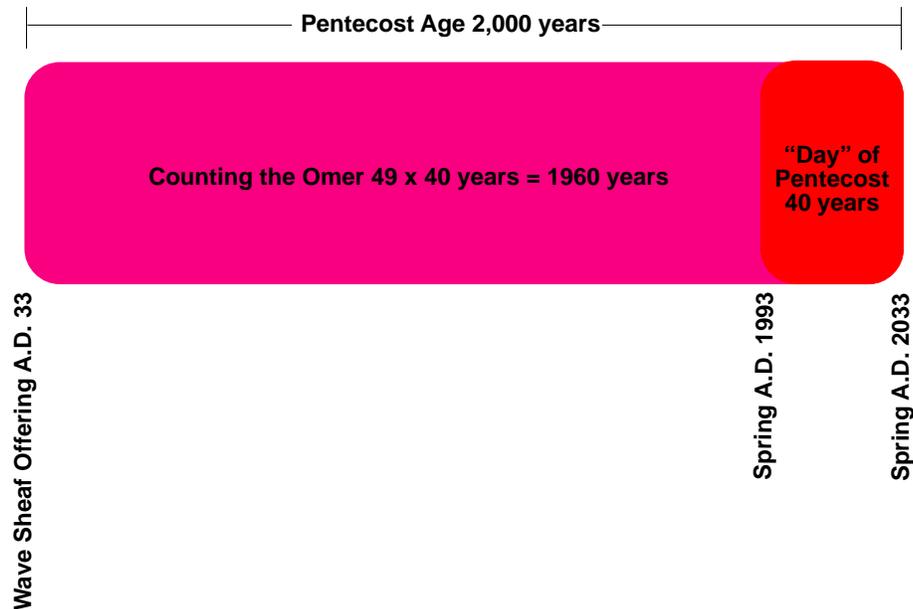
Together these two names total 148. It is fitting that the name Christ has a Gematria value of 1480.

These are the principal characters in the story. When Naomi and Ruth reached Bethlehem, Ruth went out to glean barley in the fields of Boaz. It was the time of the barley harvest when she began to glean. But the scripture says that she gleaned in the fields of Boaz “*until the end of the harvest of barley and the harvest of wheat.*” Strangely, this hint of a time element has a Gematria value of 2033. Now surely Ruth would not keep on gleaning in the fields after she married Boaz; so this would indicate that she did not marry Boaz until after the completion of the wheat harvest. So how does the apparent date of 2033 fit the picture? It appears to be contradictory with other known elements of the time of the marriage of Jesus and his Bride.

To solve the apparent glitch in the story, we must digress for a moment and look at the larger picture. When we look at the whole length of time of the 7,000 years of man’s experience, we find it is divided into ages. The brief graphic below illustrates these ages and their purpose.



Now let's look at an enlargement of the Pentecost Age. This Age is the antitypical counting of the omer, which was from the day of the Wave Sheaf offering until 50 "days" later which was the day of Pentecost. In the antitype, each of these "days" were to be 40 years in length. Thus we would count 49 x 40 which would give us 1960 years, bringing us to the spring of A.D. 1993. Following this would be the 50th "day" which would be the Great Day of Pentecost. Since each of the "days" was 40 years in length, thus the 50th "day" would also be a period of 40 years, bringing us from the spring of A.D. 1993 to the spring of A.D. 2033. Thus the Pentecost Age would look like the graphic below.



I show this graphic so the reader can see that the scripture telling us that Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz "until the end of the harvest of barley and the harvest of wheat" is prophetically saying that she gleaned until the Great Day of Pentecost, which began in A.D. 1993. She did not glean after that because the "day" from A.D. 1993 to A.D. 2033 is a feast day. On this day they went into the wheat fields and picked the first-ripe wheat which they threshed and ground into flour. From this new grain they made two small cakes, baked with leaven, and offered them unto the Lord. These two cakes, baked with leaven, represent the Body of Christ (the true church), both Jew and Gentile. They are presented to God. Being baked with leaven attests to the fact that they were developed while they were still in a sinful condition in a sinful world. It is the only place in scripture where leaven is presented to God, and where it is accepted by God. Thus, the true church, having been developed in a sinful condition, becomes acceptable to God. This presentation takes place some time between the years 1993 and 2033. Thus, antitypically, the wedding of Boaz and Ruth takes place some time between these two dates, on the Great Day of Pentecost. Therefore the time element prophesied in this statement that Ruth gleaned in the fields of Boaz "until the end of the harvest of barley and the harvest of wheat" is revealed by its Gematria – 2033. It does not give us a specific date within this 40-year period.

Ruth came to Bethlehem and began to glean in the harvest fields of Boaz at the beginning of the barley harvest, which would begin on the day of the Wave Sheaf Offering. This offering is directly connected to the Passover, which took place two days previously.

The day that marked the beginning of the counting of their religious year was determined by the ripeness of the barley. At the time of the spring new moon, the barley was checked for its development. If it was what they called “*Aviv*,” then they declared the new moon to indicate the first day of Nisan. This gave the barley sixteen days to ripen, so that by Nisan 16 there would be enough ripe barley for the Wave Sheaf Offering. This offering pictured Jesus placing the merit of his sacrifice into the hands of Divine Justice, in payment for the sin of Adam. He, and He alone, was represented by that offering of barley. Many people teach that both Jesus and his future bride are represented by the barley, but that is not shown in the type. If the prospective bride were part of that barley offering, then it would picture her part, her share, in the blood offering for Adam. Nothing in scripture indicates that she shares in that offering. Just the opposite. The scriptures plainly teach that Jesus, alone, paid the “corresponding price” for the sin of Adam – the life of a perfect man in payment for the forfeited life of a perfect man. The bride of Jesus has no part in that offering. Thus the barley represents Jesus alone. The prospective bride is a recipient of the merit of that offering.

The offering of the barley on the day of Wave Sheaf was part of the Passover function. This began their cycle of feast days, which ended on the last day of the Feast of Tabernacles – a total of 186 days in all. Jesus was crucified on the day of Passover on a hill named Golgotha. Not surprisingly, the name Golgotha has a Gematria value of 186. And in the story of Ruth we are told that she and Naomi arrived in Bethlehem “*at the beginning of the barley harvest.*” The statement has a Gematria value of 186. The barley harvest was the all-important time-setting for the story. The barley harvest represented Jesus and His work of redemption and atonement.

Boaz, representing Jesus, is mentioned many times in the story in connection with the barley harvest. In order for Ruth to claim her inheritance, she had to go to the place where the barley was being stored. The instruction given her by Naomi was: “*Go down to the grain store.*” This phrase has a Gematria value of 888, definitely connecting it with Jesus, whose Gematria number is 888. When Boaz had eaten his evening meal, “*he went to lie down at the end of the heap*” – meaning the pile of harvested barley. The phrase has a Gematria value of 888, identifying Boaz and the barley harvest with Jesus.

While Boaz was sleeping beside the pile of barley, Ruth came in and lay down at his feet. When Boaz awoke during the night and found her there, she asked him to be her kinsman-redeemer. This would not only involve the redemption of her land inheritance, but according to the levirate law, it would also mean that Boaz would take her to be his wife. Boaz was very willing to do this, for he loved Ruth, but he told her there was a nearer kinsman who had first choice.

The nearer kinsman is not named in the story. Unfortunately all of the movies portraying this story put the nearer kinsman in the role of an evil man. However, the story as is given to us in the Bible never suggests this -- it is the product of the imagination of the storyteller, in the interests of making an exciting story. Nothing in the Book of Ruth indicates that the nearer kinsman was anything other than a good and an honest man. May I suggest that the nearer kinsman represents God. In the antitype, God would be the only One who would be a nearer kinsman to Elimelech.

Elimelech was apparently the oldest of three brothers, and the unnamed nearer kinsman would be the next, and Boaz would be the third in line, probably the youngest.

It has already been shown that Elimelech represented God, married to Naomi, representing Israel. That phase of the story has ended, and now we are dealing with the two remaining brothers. We are left with no remaining choices for identification: the nearer kinsman would represent God (at this point in the story), and Boaz, the younger brother, would represent Jesus.

The nearer kinsman is never mentioned by name in the story. He is, however, referred to as “*such a one*,” whose Gematria value is 301. It has been shown at the beginning of this article that this number is definitely associated with God. When Boaz said “*There is a redeemer nearer than I*” he obviously was referring to a person whom he knew was his senior. Amazingly, that statement has a Gematria value of 792. Wow! That is the number for the Hebrew word meaning “*salvation*.” 792 is also the number for the Lord Jesus Christ when it is spelled in Hebrew. And now we find it in a statement that acknowledges there is a greater Redeemer.

The scriptures plainly tell us that Jesus was the “*only begotten of the Father*.” He was the first and only direct creation of God. God “*begat*” him – He gave him life. All the remaining acts of creation were accomplished through this Only Son. John made that clear when he said “*Through him all things were made*.” We might say the Father was the Architect, and the Son was the Workman. The plan for the redemption of man was in the Father’s plan, but the work of redemption was accomplished by the Son.

In the story, the nearer kinsman was not willing to marry Ruth because it would ruin his own inheritance. God’s inheritance to which he was already committed was his re-marriage to Israel.

God’s remarriage to Israel was prophesied in Hosea 2: “*There I will give her back her vineyards, and will make the Valley of Achor a door of hope. There she will answer (say “I do”) as in the days of her youth, as in the day she came up out of Egypt (at Sinai). In that day, declares the Lord, you will call me ‘My Husband’ ... I will betroth you to me forever; I will betroth you in righteousness and justice, in love and compassion. I will betroth you in faithfulness, and you will acknowledge the Lord ... I will plant her for myself in the land; I will show my love to the one I called ‘Not my loved one.’ I will say to those called ‘Not my people’ ‘You are my people’ and they will say, ‘You are my God.’*”

Isaiah also prophesied of this re-marriage of God to Israel: “*No longer will they call you Deserted (she had been deserted during the divorce), or name your land Desolate (because her land had also been desolate after the divorce). But you will be called Hephzibah, and your land Beulah; for the Lord will take delight in you, and your land will be married ... as a bridegroom rejoices over his bride, so will your God rejoice over you.*” (Isaiah 62)

It was this promise that God would re-marry Israel that was the all-important “*inheritance*” that he could not break. But as long as Israel is in unbelief, she cannot be married. And for her to believe, it requires teachers. And here is where the epilogue to the story becomes an important part of the prophecy.

Boaz and Ruth were married and soon Ruth bore a son. The women of the community gave him the name “Obed.” And they said “*Blessed be Jehovah, who has not left you this day without a redeemer; and let his name be called in Israel. And may he be to you a restorer of life, and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law, who loves you, has born him, who is better to you than seven sons.*”

The phrase “*better than seven sons*” is a Hebrew idiom, which means the ultimate in progeny. Naomi had lost two sons, but now her daughter-in-law, Ruth, is said to be better to her than seven sons. Remember, Naomi represents Israel and Ruth represents the true church, the bride of Christ. But at this point in time, Ruth has given birth to a son who was given the name Obed, which means “One who serves.” But the women of the community said that Naomi had a son. And indeed Naomi (Israel) became his nurse, and nourished him in her bosom. He was, indeed, a “*restorer of life to Naomi.*”

What does it mean in antitype? If Boaz represents Jesus Christ, and if Ruth represents the true church, His bride, then it is telling us that this union will produce offspring – a son who will serve. And this son becomes a restorer of life to Israel. So, what do the scriptures tell us regarding the child of this union?

Psalm 45 is a beautiful description of the royal wedding. After describing the bride in all her beauty, strangely it then goes on and tells of the offspring that she will bear. “*Your sons will take the place of your fathers; you will make them princes throughout the land.*” And the prophet Malachi told us that one of their ancient fathers would turn the hearts of the people from unbelief into belief. “*I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the Lord comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers.*”

Who are these teachers who will turn Israel’s heart and cause them to believe? Psalm 45 says they are the sons of Jesus and his Bride. If so, then the son of Boaz and Ruth would represent them. He was “*one who serves.*” That service will be the teaching of Israel to believe. And the prophet Zechariah assured us that they will indeed believe. “*They will look upon him whom they have pierced, and mourn for him as one mourns for an only son.*”

It is in response to Israel’s belief that God saves them from their enemies by means of Jesus and his Bride as is prophesied in Revelation 19. After the royal wedding, it is then that He comes on a white horse, symbolizing ruling authority, and his bride is with him. (Of course he does not literally ride through the sky on a literal white horse – the coming on the white horse is a pictorial symbol of him coming in a position of authority.) Together they turn back Israel’s enemies and save Israel from destruction.

There is a necessary time sequence involved in these events. And they all take place on the great antitypical Day of Pentecost – between spring 1993 and spring 2033. First is the Royal Wedding of Jesus and His Bride. Then the bearing of the sons, which implies a resurrection of the ancient fathers of Israel. Then Israel is taught by these ancient fathers to believe and put their trust wholly in God.

The great Day of Pentecost (1993 - 2033) is a wedding day. It was on this typical day in the year 1448 B.C. that Moses received the law, and the people said “*All these things will we do.*” But Israel didn’t do them. She became an unfaithful wife, and eventually killed the One who was sent to restore her. She cannot be restored until she believes. And the scriptures tell us that she will not believe until teachers (her ancient fathers) are sent. And those ancient fathers cannot receive their re-birth (resurrection) until Jesus and his bride are married. It is a necessary sequence of events. If we leave anything out it simply will not fit. If we mix up the sequence it will not fit. But God does eventually re-marry Israel, after she comes and professes her belief. This also must be within the confines of the Great Day of Pentecost (1993 - 2033), the great wedding day.

In the epilogue of the story, Ruth gives birth to Obed. Obed begets Jesse, and Jesse begets David who became the king of Israel. It is apparent that Obed represents the ancient fathers who teach Israel to believe. But who does Jesse represent in this scenario?

May I suggest that Jesse represents restored Israel who comes to believe, and who pledges their wedding vows to God. These wedding vows are written for our observation in the 119th Psalm. The entire Psalm is the expression of Israel's pledge of faithfulness and belief. Never in all of history has Israel ever kept those vows that are so eloquently written in this Psalm. But they are not idle words never to be fulfilled. Their very existence is prophetic of their fulfillment.

In the epilogue of the story of Ruth, it states "*And Boaz begat Obed, and Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David.*" It is amazing that the Hebrew words "*And Boaz begat*" have a Gematria value of 541. Throughout the entire Old Testament, the name Israel has a Gematria value of 541. It appears that the Gematria recorded in this epilogue has purposely identified the progeny of Boaz as representing Israel in some manner. Obed appropriately represents the ancient fathers of Israel who are raised and teach Israel to believe. Jesse would then represent the body/polity of Israel who are in a condition of belief – restored to covenant relationship with God. It is here, to that people who are represented by Jesse, that Jesus comes as the restored King on David's throne – the antitypical David. It is here that He sets up His Kingdom, dispensing Divine Government to all the world.

"Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever." (Isaiah 9:7)