



# Waiting Patiently for Redemption

## Summary and Goal

Naomi wanted to help facilitate a marriage between her daughter-in-law Ruth and the man named Boaz. Ruth's character and diligent work ethic caught his eye, and he acknowledged his desire to marry Ruth—the act of “redeeming” the outsider from Moab. However, Boaz asked Ruth to wait patiently to ensure there wasn't another kinsman redeemer with closer family ties to her. Just like in Ruth's story, often God will ask us to be patient during seasons of waiting and to remain close to Him as our ultimate Redeemer.

### **Main Passages**

Ruth 3:1-18

### **Session Outline**

1. Ruth's Great Need (Ruth 3:1-9)
2. Boaz's Response to Ruth (Ruth 3:10-13)
3. Ruth's Wait (Ruth 3:14-18)

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### **Theological Theme**

Like Ruth, Christians were once outside the family of God, broken and needy. They find their hope in a redeemer. Boaz, in his redemptive role, prefigured Christ.

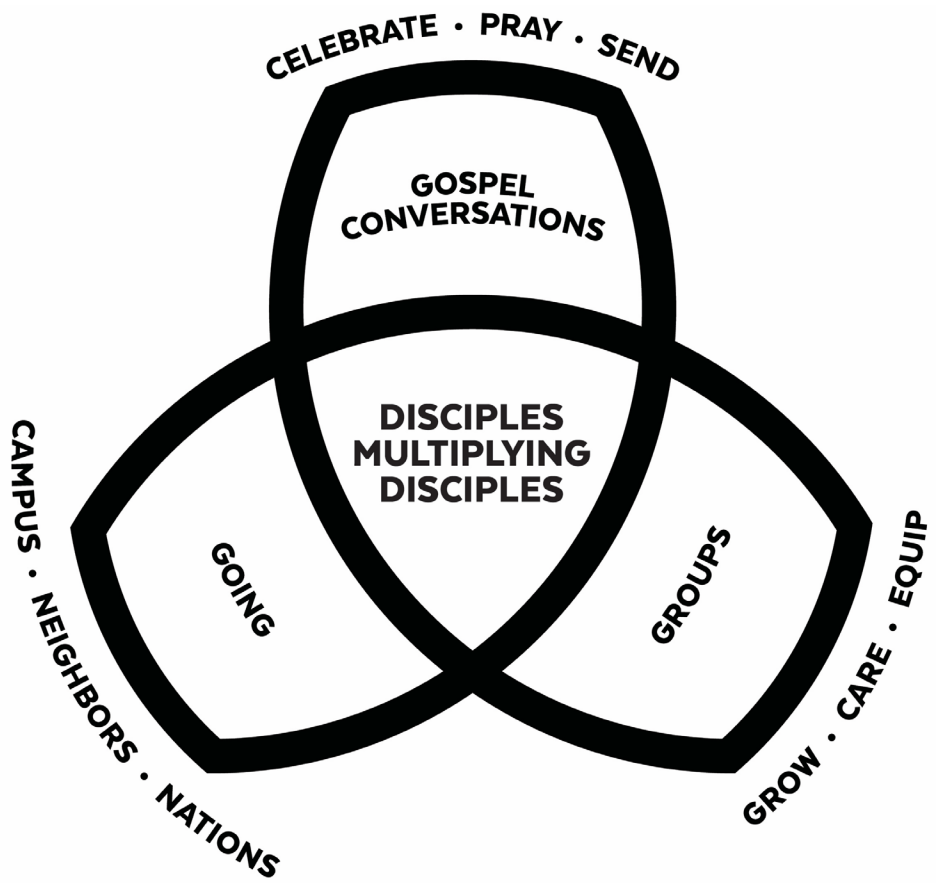
### **Christ Connection**

Christians have no hope without the intervention of a redeemer. But the Son of God, Jesus Christ, has appeared in flesh to redeem those who are under the curse of the law.

### **Missional Application**

Christians point to a welcoming Redeemer who never turns away the humble and needy.

# Disciples Multiplying Disciples



# 3

## Session Plan

# Waiting Patiently for Redemption

### Introduction

- ❓ What security measures do you have in place at your home, in your car, or at your workplace?
- ❓ How important is security to you? Why do you think people desire security?

Ruth, a Gentile, turned from her family and her gods to follow Naomi and her God. When they arrived in Israel, Ruth was an outsider. Yet, she was rescued by a redeemer. Similarly, Christians were once outsiders and enemies of God. They were without hope because they were ungodly and unfit to be in right relationship with their Creator. But, in love, God sought them. And when those sinners looked upon Christ with faith and repentance, He did not cast them out (John 6:37). Although Christians are waiting now for their full and final redemption, they can wait securely knowing that “he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

### 1. Ruth’s Great Need (Ruth 3:1-9)

Abraham’s descendants were a people set apart. God chose them to glorify Him by living in the way that reflected His character, worshiping Him in the way that He prescribed, and ultimately becoming a light to the Gentiles. Though they were called to be a light to the Gentiles, they were forbidden from adopting the Gentiles’ practices of idolatry. Israel was a nation set apart for God, and they were to remain pure in their worship, behavior, and worldview. Being a light to the Gentiles meant living according to and proclaiming the truth, even if that truth was uncomfortable.

- ❓ Why would it be necessary for Israel to reject the worldview and beliefs of other nations? Why couldn’t they just tolerate one another and live in harmony?
- ❓ How have all people been like Ruth before she turned to the true and living God of Israel?

- Application: How did you come to Christ? How do you come to Him now? What is the root of your hope of salvation?

## 2. Boaz's Response to Ruth (Ruth 3:10-13)

Ruth came to Boaz and lay at his feet. She came to him helpless and vulnerable, bringing nothing and seeking his mercy.

- How did Boaz respond to Ruth?
- How did the response of Boaz mirror the future response of Christ to His people?
- Application: How does Christ's merciful response to sinners change the way you view your life? How does it change your view of sin?

## 3. Ruth's Wait (Ruth 3:14-18)

Boaz didn't redeem Ruth immediately. There was another man who could still take action, so Boaz went to speak with him.

- How do you imagine Ruth felt as she waited to learn the other man's response? When have you anxiously awaited a response from God in your life?
- What parallel might be found between Ruth's wait and Christians' wait now on earth?
- Application: In what ways have you sought to secure your own salvation? Why is this impossible?

## Conclusion

Boaz is an illustration of Christ the Redeemer. Christians are like Ruth in that they came to their Redeemer with nothing to offer and pressed to the dust, seeking His mercy. Christ is like Boaz in that He has responded with mercy and compassion, determined to redeem all who are His.

- How did Boaz demonstrate grace and mercy to Ruth? How does Christ demonstrate both?
- If you are a Christian, one who has been redeemed by Christ, how should this change the way you interact with others, both those who have also been redeemed by Christ and those who have not yet met Him?
- How should the redeeming work of Christ lead Christians to tell others about the great love of God?



## Expanded Session Content

# Waiting Patiently for Redemption

### Introduction

- ❓ What security measures do you have in place at your home, in your car, or at your workplace?
- ❓ How important is security to you? Why do you think people desire security?

Those living in the West today enjoy and rely upon many forms of security that people throughout the history of the world couldn't have imagined. We have everything from deep-freezers to flood insurance to first-aid kits provide us with a sense of security. These are meant to give us peace of mind and the ability to focus on something other than anxiety over the "what-ifs." Security is important because it enables people to improve their station by means of innovation and creativity. For example, it's much easier to think about ways to more effectively collect rainwater if you don't have to protect your goats from predators because you have secured them with a strong fence.

The desire to feel secure isn't sinful. People were created with the need and desire to be secure. However, our efforts to achieve our own security can be sinful. Our security was never meant to come from our own wisdom or abilities—no true security can be found there. Ultimately our security and peace of mind must come from an acknowledgment of and submission to the sovereignty and goodness of God. This is especially true in the securing of our souls.

One of the greatest truths of Christianity and the gospel is this: God justifies the ungodly (Rom. 4:5). That glorious security is brilliantly illustrated in the story of Ruth. There we see a type of Christ in Boaz, Ruth's redeemer.

### Session Summary

Ruth, a Gentile, turned from her family and her gods to follow Naomi and her God. When they arrived in Israel, Ruth was an outsider. Yet, she was rescued by a redeemer. Similarly, Christians were once outsiders

and enemies of God. They were without hope because they were ungodly and unfit to be in right relationship with their Creator. But, in love, God sought them. And when those sinners looked upon Christ with faith and repentance, He did not cast them out (John 6:37). Although Christians are waiting now for their full and final redemption, they can wait securely knowing that “he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Phil. 1:6).

## 1. Ruth’s Great Need (Ruth 3:1-9)

Naomi wanted the best for Ruth, and she felt that going to Boaz was Ruth’s best chance of being cared for. Boaz was a kinsman-redeemer, and we know him to be a good man. Ruth wisely decided to follow Naomi’s advice. This dialogue between Naomi and Ruth not only highlights Naomi’s wisdom and Ruth’s bravery, but it also reveals the deep trust and love that they had for one another. Naomi, from the beginning, was worried about Ruth’s welfare, which is why she urged her to return to her family in Moab. Ruth refused to leave out of love for Naomi. The story of Ruth is a story of love, devotion, and honor—even amidst bleak circumstances.

Abraham’s descendants were a people set apart. God chose them to glorify Him by living in the way that reflected His character, worshiping Him in the way that He prescribed, and ultimately becoming a light to the Gentiles. Though they were called to be a light to the Gentiles, they were forbidden from adopting the Gentiles’ practices of idolatry. Israel was a nation set apart for God, and they were to remain pure in their worship, behavior, and worldview. Being a light to the Gentiles meant living according to and proclaiming the truth, even if that truth was uncomfortable.


- ❓ Why would it be necessary for Israel to reject the worldview and beliefs of other nations? Why couldn’t they just tolerate one another and live in harmony?

There can be no fellowship between darkness and light (2 Cor. 6:14). Make no mistake about it: worldviews and belief systems are not neutral. They either align with the revealed will of God or they are opposed to it. That’s not to say that there is no truth in other religions. For example, other religions acknowledge the existence of a divine creator and judge. This is true and a good foundation upon which to build. However, the problem is that the structure that rests upon this basic assumption is rotten, and those who live in it will be crushed by its caving in.

### I Will Do Everything You Say

Ruth’s statement to Naomi was a more forceful statement than simply “I will do this.” It was an acknowledgment of several things: First, she trusted Naomi’s commitment to the Lord to have her do only what was morally right. Second, she trusted Naomi’s loving attachment to her that she was not being put at undue risk, in terms of safety from seduction (her purity). Third, she trusted Naomi’s judgment that this was the best way to approach the situation, in terms of safety from slander (her reputation). Finally, she trusted Naomi’s assessment of Boaz’s character and his response, despite the plethora of possible responses that she might envision. She simply trusted Naomi.


“What fellowship does light have with darkness”? (2 Cor. 6:14). None, for when the light enters, darkness flees. There can be no mixture of light and shadow. For this reason, Israel was commanded to reject Ruth’s gods had she arrived in Israel still worshipping them. Ruth was of Moab and arrived in Israel as an outsider, but she would not remain in that condition.

 How have all people been like Ruth before she turned to the true and living God of Israel?

“All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3:23) and are separated from God because of their transgression. Every man, woman, and child is born in a position of opposition to their Creator. Isaiah 59:2 says, “your iniquities are separating you from your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not listen.”


Anyone who comes to God must come as Ruth did—with humility and repentance. They must forsake their gods (whatever those may be!) and take the posture of a servant, knowing they are owed nothing and deserve nothing. They must come as a beggar seeking only to partake of the crumbs from the table. All those who come to Christ have come this way. Maybe this seems harsh, but it is an altogether appropriate view of the matter when one perceives his or her sinfulness.

How could someone, after all that God has done for them, shake their fist in His face by breaking His law? God created us, provides for us from birth, and gives us abundant and unmerited gifts and kindnesses. Yet, we have turned our backs on Him time and time again. Like ungrateful children, we have scoffed at His overtures of kindness. Our continual rebellion against God’s law reveals how deep our depravity really is. What hope does a person have after offending such a great God to this degree? Like Ruth, without someone to intervene and intercede, we have none.

 Application: How did you come to Christ? How do you come to Him now? What is the root of your hope of salvation?

## 2. Boaz’s Response to Ruth (Ruth 3:10-13)

Ruth came to Boaz and lay at his feet. She came to him helpless and vulnerable, bringing nothing and seeking his mercy.

 How did Boaz respond to Ruth?

Here we find a most tender illustration of Christ’s response to those who come to Him humbly. Ruth said to Boaz, “Take me under your wing” (v. 9). This calls to mind Christ’s words as He looked over Jerusalem: “How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks

under her wings, but you were not willing!” (Matt. 23:37). Ruth knew she was helpless and hopeless without the strength of a redeemer. She was in desperate need of someone to redeem her from her old way of life and her old gods to bring her into a new home to live as a family member who was provided for and protected. She needed a savior, and Boaz was her savior. When Ruth’s eyes were opened to this fact, she went to him as humbly as possible, with empty hands pressed to the dust.

Take note of Boaz’s response, “Now don’t be afraid, my daughter. I will do for you whatever you say” (v. 11). Boaz noticed her poor estate, and he responded to her with mercy, compassion, and kindness. He didn’t demand payment for his favor; he needed nothing, and she had nothing to give. But he didn’t shrink away from her estrangement, for he had the power to make her a citizen of Israel.

The phrase “noble character” that Boaz used in 3:11 can also be translated as “strength.” This is the same Hebrew word used to describe the Proverbs 31 woman in Proverbs 31:29 to describe a “capable” woman. In the Hebrew Bible, the Book of Ruth follows the Book of Proverbs. Ruth is exactly the kind of woman that Proverbs 31:10-31 describes.



How did the response of Boaz mirror the future response of Christ to His people?

Jesus said, “Everyone the Father gives me will come to me, and the one who comes to me I will never cast out” (John 6:37). This promise of Christ is one of the most precious in all the Scriptures. Sinners who come to the Redeemer with faith and repentance will never be turned away. Christ will never turn away those who come to Him seeking salvation in the same manner Ruth came before Boaz: with empty hands pressed to the dust. It’s true that there is none righteous (Rom. 3:10), but the door is open wide for all of those who will humbly stoop low enough to enter. The blood of the Lamb has secured safe passage, for He is the Redeemer of sinners.



Application: How does Christ’s merciful response to sinners change the way you view your life? How does it change your view of sin?

### 3. Ruth’s Wait (Ruth 3:14-18)

Boaz didn’t redeem Ruth immediately. There was another man who could still take action, so Boaz went to speak with him.



How do you imagine Ruth felt as she waited to learn the other man’s response? When have you anxiously awaited a response from God in your life?



Ruth's whole life and future was at stake. She didn't know who this other man was, and she didn't know what might happen to her in his hands. She had looked upon Boaz, and though she didn't know him, she saw his kindness and mercy toward her and wanted him as her redeemer. She wanted to hide herself under his wings, not the wings of another.

When Ruth returned to Naomi that morning, notice what Naomi said to her: "My daughter, wait until you find out how things go, for he won't rest unless he resolves this today" (v. 18). Naomi reassured Ruth that the matter would be settled that very day. She felt sure that Boaz was determined to settle the question about Ruth's future as soon as possible.



What parallel might be found between Ruth's wait and Christians' wait now on earth?

When a sinner comes to Christ with faith and repentance, Christ does not turn them away. Yet, he does not take them to heaven immediately either. Christians must rest in the strength and security of the Word of God and the promise of a final and full redemption. We must be careful not to stretch this illustration past its breaking point. Boaz was a type of Christ and provides Christians today a means by which they can reflect upon their Redeemer. However, Boaz was a mere man. Christ is God in flesh. Boaz certainly had the will to redeem Ruth, but there was another man standing in his way, and it was possible that the man could have thwarted Boaz's plans to redeem Ruth.

Christ also faced opposition in His efforts to redeem the lost. Satan sought to tempt Christ to sin. The suffering Christ had to endure was horrific. The weight of sin He carried on the cross was unimaginable. There was never a doubt about His success though, for it was set out from the foundation of the world that He would be the spotless Lamb of God slain for the redemption of God's people (Eph. 1:4).

Ruth had reason to worry and doubt, not about Boaz's will, but about the final outcome of her situation. Christians have no warrant for anxiety. Christ's will has been made clear, as has His ability. Christians have been justified, and their final glorification in Christ is sure. This is why Paul was able to say: "I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus" (Phil. 1:6).

Scripture teaches that those who are truly born again will surely persevere. A true Christian cannot lose their salvation because it is held secure by the work of Jesus Christ, which will never fail. If a person could lose their salvation, they would. But they neither earn it nor maintain it. Jesus both

saved Christians and keeps them saved. That's what the writer of Hebrews meant when he said, "Therefore, he is able to save completely those who come to God through him, since he always lives to intercede for them" (Heb.7:25).

- ? Application: In what ways have you sought to secure your own salvation? Why is this impossible?

## Conclusion

Boaz is an illustration of Christ the Redeemer. Christians are like Ruth in that they came to their Redeemer with nothing to offer and pressed to the dust, seeking His mercy. Christ is like Boaz in that He has responded with mercy and compassion, determined to redeem all who are His.

- ? How did Boaz demonstrate grace and mercy to Ruth? How does Christ demonstrate both?
- ? If you are a Christian, one who has been redeemed by Christ, how should this change the way you interact with others, both those who have also been redeemed by Christ and those who have not yet met Him?
- ? How should the redeeming work of Christ lead Christians to tell others about the great love of God?

## Prayer of Response

*Take time to give thanks for the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who never casts out those who come to Him in faith and repentance. Worship Christ with a humble and grateful heart and ask for His help to spread the message of the gospel throughout your neighborhood and the world.*

## Additional Resources

- *Judges and Ruth by Barry Webb*
- *Ruth for You by Tony Merida*
- *Judges, Ruth by K. Lawson Younger*

## For Next Week

### Session Title

- The Willingness to Redeem

### Main Passages

- Ruth 4:1-22

### Session Outline

1. Ruth's Inability (Ruth 4:1-6)
2. Boaz's Ability (Ruth 4:7-12)
3. Boaz's Willingness (Ruth 4:13-22)

### Memorize

Then he said, "May the Lord bless you, my daughter. You have shown more kindness now than before, because you have not pursued younger men, whether rich or poor.

- Ruth 3:10

### Daily Readings

- Monday - Ruth 3:1-4
- Tuesday - Ruth 3:5-7
- Wednesday - Ruth 3:8-9
- Thursday - Ruth 3:10-13
- Friday - Ruth 3:14-15
- Saturday - Ruth 3:16-18

# Historical Context of Ruth

## Purpose

Ruth's covenantal faithfulness to her mother-in-law Naomi and her God provided a model showing that those who were not ethnic Israelites could be incorporated into the people of God through faith. If Moabites who joined themselves to the Lord could be accepted, there was hope for other Gentiles as well (Is 56:3–7). The book also effectively answered questions that may have been raised over the legitimacy of the Davidic line, given his Moabite roots.

## Author

The Talmud attributes the authorship of Ruth to Samuel, but the book itself offers no hint of the identity of its author. We can only speculate about who might have written the book of Ruth, and its provenance and date must be deduced from the internal evidence—language and style, historical allusions, and themes. The family records at the end and the explanation of archaic customs requires a date during or later than the reign of King David (1011–971 BC), though it could have been written as late as after the exile, when the issue of the inclusion of Gentiles once again became pressing.

## Setting

The book of Ruth is set “during the time of the judges” (1:1), a period of social and religious disorder when “everyone did whatever seemed right to him” (Jdg 17:6). Historically, this era bridged the time between the conquest of the land under Joshua and the rise of King David, whose family records form the conclusion of the book. It is not clear exactly when during the time of the judges the book belongs, but it opens with a famine in the land, which may have been the result of Israel's idolatry.

## Special Features

The book of Ruth gets its name from one of its principal characters, a Moabite woman named Ruth who was the ancestor of David and Jesus. After reading the book of Judges, which paints a dark and depressing picture of Israel, the reader is relieved to encounter Ruth. Although the book is relatively short, it is rich in examples of kindness, faith, and patience. It is one of the five scrolls that was to be read during the Jewish festivals, in particular the Festival of Weeks.

## Extended Commentary

### Ruth 3:1-18

3:1–3 In view of Boaz’s relationship to the family and his kindness and generosity thus far to Ruth, perhaps he could be persuaded to take the further step of marriage. At the end of the barley harvest, in late May or June, the barley had to be winnowed, tossed into the air with a shovel allowing the wind to carry away the lighter chaff while the heavier grain fell to the ground. At night, someone would guard the grain against being stolen or eaten by animals. Apparently, this was Boaz’s night to be on duty. Dressing as Naomi instructed would not only enhance Ruth’s attractiveness to Boaz but would symbolize an end to her period of mourning for her husband (2Sm 12:20), signaling her willingness to remarry.

3:4–7 Naomi instructed Ruth to go to Boaz when he was asleep and uncover his feet, or, more precisely, “uncover the place of his feet.” By this act Ruth was inquiring about Boaz’s willingness to fulfill the role of family redeemer, to take her as wife and provide for her (see note at 4:5–8). Ruth’s action, at Naomi’s advice, is ambiguous. The verb uncover is often used in the OT of illicit sexual relations. Thus the word has association with immoral acts, and the threshing floor was notorious as a place of illicit sexual activities. Also, lie down often implies sexual activity (Gn 19:33). Further, “feet” is used in the OT as a euphemism for male sexual organs (Ex 4:25; Jdg 3:24; 1Sm 24:3; Is 7:20). However, the form of the noun used here is only used one other time, in Dn 10:6, where it clearly refers to the whole of the lower limbs, including the feet, legs, and thighs. On the other hand, Ruth’s actions can be interpreted as a humble petitioner seeking Boaz’s protection. She uncovered Boaz’s feet to the cold night air so it would arouse him from sleep and she could speak to him privately. This chaste interpretation of all these ambiguities is most likely, as Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz are all consistently portrayed as virtuous and honorable persons.

3:8–9 Whereas her mother-in-law had anticipated Boaz taking the initiative in the conversation, Ruth responded to Boaz’s question about her identity with a clarification of her purpose. She asked him to spread the corner of his robe over her as a symbolic statement of a marriage commitment (Ezk 16:8). The request also involved a wordplay, since take me under your wing literally is “spread your wing over me,” inviting Boaz to become the answer to his own prayer in 2:12 that she might find refuge under the wings of the Lord.

3:10–11 Boaz’s first words, my daughter, showed he had not been misled by the potential ambiguity of the situation. He declared himself willing to pay the social and financial costs of welcoming this despised outsider into his family. Boaz rightly saw Ruth’s proposal as another act of covenant faithfulness (Hb chesed) on Ruth’s part. Just as she had left her own household and her own family to be with Naomi, so now she was subordinating her own interests to those of Naomi. In the Hebrew ordering of the OT, the book of Ruth comes immediately after the book of Proverbs, which closes with a description of a woman of noble character (Pr 31:10).

3:12–13 Even though Boaz was a near relative of Naomi, there was another who had a prior claim to act as redeemer. Yet Boaz reassured Ruth that one way or another, she (and Naomi) would be redeemed.

3:14–15 If it became widely known that Ruth had visited Boaz that night, people would wrongly assume that Boaz had taken Ruth as wife or that they were guilty of sexual impropriety. Boaz was unwilling to preempt his close relative who had first right of refusal to Ruth, so getting Ruth home before daylight kept wrong impressions from being formed. To seal his commitment (and perhaps also to provide Ruth with an excuse for being out so early), Boaz gave her six measures of barley. If the unspecified measures are seahs, then that would be around eighty pounds, an enormous load. Yet the lack of a measure may be intended to focus attention on the number six, which often represents incompleteness in the OT. Even this generous gift is incomplete. Ruth still awaited the final installment of “seed” that would accomplish her rest.

3:16–18 On Ruth’s return, Naomi asked her literally, “Who are you, my daughter?” This is the same question that Boaz asked in 3:8. Was Ruth merely an awkward and embarrassing duty to Naomi, or was she the one who would provide Naomi with an enduring place in the family records of Israel through the provision of a son? The answer depended on what transpired overnight. This was the real nature of Naomi’s question, as evidenced by Ruth’s answer.<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. *CSB Study Bible: Christian Standard Bible*. Nashville, TN: Holman Bible Publishers, 2017.

## Author Bio

### **Barry Webb (Judges and Ruth)**

Barry G. Webb (PhD, University of Sheffield) is the senior research fellow emeritus in Old Testament at Moore Theological College in Sydney, Australia. He is the author of numerous scholarly articles and books and his work has been published in eight different languages. Barry and his wife live in Australia and have three daughters and five grandchildren.

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### **K. Lawson Younger (Judges, Ruth)**

K. Lawson Younger, Jr. (PhD, University of Sheffield) is professor of Old Testament, Semitic languages, and ancient near eastern history at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in Deerfield, Illinois. He is the author, associate editor, and coeditor of several books, and has contributed to numerous collections of essays, dictionaries and periodicals.