

Book of Ruth

Synopsis



Introduction

Book No	8
Name	Ruth
Written By	Samuel
Testament	Old
Category	History
Date Written	Approx. 1375 - 1050 BC
Place Written	Israel
Audience	To the people of Israel
Purpose	To show how three people remained strong in character and true to God even when the society around them was collapsing
History Covered	NA
Chapters	4
Verses	85
Key Verse	And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God (1:16)
Key People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Ruth ❖ Naomi ❖ Boaz
Key Places	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Moab ❖ Bethlehem

Purpose of the Book

The book of Ruth, however, tells a different story. Ruth loved her mother-in-law, Naomi. Recently widowed, Ruth begged to stay with Naomi wherever she went, even though it would mean leaving her homeland. In heartfelt words, Ruth said, “Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God” (1:16). Naomi agreed, and Ruth traveled with her to Bethlehem.

Not much is said about Naomi except that she loved and cared for Ruth. Obviously, Naomi’s life was a powerful witness to the reality of God. Ruth was drawn to her—and to the God she worshiped. In the succeeding months, God led this young Moabite widow to a man named Boaz, whom she eventually married. As a result, she became the great-grandmother of David and an ancestor in the line of the Messiah. What a profound impact Naomi’s life made!

The book of Ruth is also the story of God’s grace in the midst of difficult circumstances. Ruth’s story occurred during the time of the judges—a period of disobedience, idolatry, and violence. Even in times of crisis and deepest despair, there are those who follow God and through whom God works. No matter how discouraging or antagonistic the world may seem, there are always people who follow God. He will use anyone who is open to him to achieve his purposes. Ruth was a Moabite, and Boaz was a descendant of Rahab, a former prostitute from Jericho. Nevertheless, their offspring continued the family line through which the Messiah came into our world.

The messages of Ruth transcend the immediately obvious purpose of providing the Davidic genealogy. Ruth presents several grand themes, each of which merit exploration and elaboration.

- 1) The Book of Ruth introduces the *universal* scope of redemption’s purposes. The inclusion of the Moabitess, Ruth, as a Gentile participant in Israel’s kingly line, pictures God’s love as it reaches out to all the nations of the world. He not only incorporates Gentiles in His salvation, but employs non-Jewish people as instruments in His redemptive program. Ruth’s message dissolves tendencies toward exclusivism, whether potential in Israel at that time or realized in any group’s traditions in our time.
- 2) The Book of Ruth ennobles the beauty of *commitment and friendship* and underscores the values of family commitment. Both values are obviously important and desirably reinforced in our time. Ruth’s prioritizing her daughter-servant role to the aging Naomi, Naomi’s preoccupation with Ruth’s best interest, and Boaz’s self-

effacing will to see the endowment of a foreign maid with what will bring her a promising future, are all worthy of examination in this regard.

3) Ruth is a book of glorious *redemptive imagery*. The principle God proposed through the tradition of the levirate marriage (Deut. 25:5–10) dramatically reveals His will that human loss always be recoverable and that we work with Him in extending such possibilities to those in need. While technically speaking no levirate marriage occurs in the Book of Ruth, it is this principle from which Boaz's actions spring and by which the spirit of God's redemptive ways is illustrated.

Read this book and be encouraged. God is at work in the world, and he wants to use you. God could use you, as he used Naomi, to bring family and friends to him.

Overview

- ❖ 8th book of the BIBLE, Old Testament and 3rd of the 12 Historical books
- ❖ Ruth is the great grandmother of David
- ❖ The Book of Ruth is divided into four distinct settings.
 - 1st setting: The country of Moab. 1:1-18
 - 2nd setting: A field in Bethlehem. 1:19 - 2:23
 - 3rd setting: A threshing floor in Bethlehem. 3:1-18
 - 4th setting: The city of Bethlehem. 4:1-22
- ❖ Ruth is a virtuous woman. 3:11
- ❖ Love is demonstrated in chapters 1 & 2 and rewarded in chapters 3 & 4
- ❖ Kinsman-Redeemer Means "One who redeems." Appears 13 times in the Book of Ruth.

Hebrew Names of GOD used in Ruth

- ❖ EL-SHADDAI
- ❖ GAOL

Revelation of JESUS CHRIST

Boaz presents one of the most dramatic figures found anywhere in the Old Testament to foreshadow the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. The role of the "kinsman-redeemer," so beautifully fulfilled in Boaz's actions bringing about Ruth's personal restoration, speaks eloquently in this regard. His actions accomplish her enfranchisement in the blessings of Israel and bring her into the family line of the Messiah (Eph. 2:19). Here is a magnificent silhouette of the Master, foreshadowing

His redemptive grace centuries in advance. As our “Kinsman,” He becomes flesh—comes as a man (John 1:14; Phil. 2:5–8). By His willingness to identify with the human family (as Boaz assumed the duties of his human family), Christ has worked a thorough-going redemption of our plight. Further, Ruth’s inability to do anything to alter her estate typifies absolute human helplessness (Rom. 5:6); and Boaz’s willingness to pay the complete price (4:9) foreshadows Christ’s full payment for our salvation (1 Cor. 6:20; Gal. 3:13; 1 Pet. 1:18, 19).

Work of THE HOLY SPIRIT

There is no direct reference to the Holy Spirit in this book. Notably, at the juncture of Ruth’s first encounter with Boaz, Naomi’s guidance may be seen as a representative way in which the Holy Spirit prompts and directs 1) to bring people to Christ (John 16:8; Rom. 2:4) and 2) to lead them to the accomplished purpose of God for human blessing (John 16:13–15; Gal. 5:5, 16–18, 22–25).

Mega Themes of Ruth

FAITHFULNESS

Ruth’s faithfulness to Naomi as a daughter-in-law and friend is a great example of love and loyalty. Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz are also faithful to God and his laws. Throughout the story we see God’s faithfulness to his people.

Ruth’s life was guided by faithfulness toward God and showed itself in loyalty toward the people she knew. To be loyal and loving in relationships, we must imitate God’s faithfulness in our relationships with others.

KINDNESS

Ruth showed great kindness to Naomi. In turn, Boaz showed kindness to Ruth—a despised Moabite woman with no money. God showed his kindness to Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz by bringing them together for his purposes.

Just as Boaz showed his kindness by buying back land to guarantee Ruth and Naomi’s inheritance, so Christ showed his kindness by dying for us to guarantee our eternal life. God’s kindness should motivate us to love and honor him.

INTEGRITY

Ruth showed high moral character by being loyal to Naomi, by her clean break from

her former land and customs, and by her hard work in the fields. Boaz showed integrity in his moral standards, his honesty, and by following through on his commitments.

When we have experienced God’s faithfulness and kindness, we should respond by showing integrity. Just as the values by which Ruth and Boaz lived were in sharp contrast to those of the culture portrayed in <Judges, so our lives should stand out from the world around us.

PROTECTION

We see God’s care and protection over the lives of Naomi and Ruth. His supreme control over circumstances brings them safety and security. He guides the minds and activities of people to fulfill his purposes.

No matter how devastating our present situation may be, our hope is in God. His resources are infinite. We must believe that he can work in the life of any person—whether that person is a king or a stranger in a foreign land. Trust his protection.

PROSPERITY/BLESSING

Ruth and Naomi came to Bethlehem as poor widows, but they soon became prosperous through Ruth’s marriage to Boaz. Ruth became the great-grandmother of King David. Yet the greatest blessing was not the money, the marriage, or the child; it was the quality of love and respect between Ruth, Boaz, and Naomi.

We tend to think of blessings in terms of prosperity rather than the high-quality relationships God makes possible for us. No matter what our economic situation, we can love and respect the people God has brought into our lives. In so doing, we give and receive blessings. Love is the greatest blessing.

Life Lessons in Ruth

Truth	Lesson
<p>Growing in Godliness</p> <p>Hospitality involves exhibiting kindness and generosity to strangers. God asks us to treat strangers as well as we would treat a friend or relative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Practice hospitality to strangers. ❖ Bless them freely, even as you would someone you know and love. Boaz blessed Ruth; and God, in turn, blessed Boaz.

<p>Cultivating Dynamic Devotion</p> <p>Boaz was a close relative, or redeemer, to Ruth and Naomi. He bought back their lives from calamity, bitterness, poverty, potential abuse, barrenness, and social ostracism. As a type of Christ, Boaz's redemption of Ruth helps us to better understand the tremendous redemption that Jesus' life purchased for us.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Understand and praise God that He has not left us without a redeemer! Jesus, our redeemer, is our restorer of life and our sustainer. Understanding this glorious truth unleashes heartfelt devotion to the Lord.
<p>Pursuing Holiness</p> <p>The Book of Ruth is full of principles regarding righteous, godly relationships. Ruth is a supreme example of someone who places a high priority on personal relationships. She exemplifies loyalty, servanthood, diligence, and moral righteousness. Great blessing and health can be found in learning to relate to others as Ruth did.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Determine to remain loyal to those to whom you are committed. Do not be dissuaded from following through on your word. ❖ Learn to serve. God calls us to serve those with whom we are in relationship. ❖ Know that God honors those with a servant's heart. ❖ Remember, Jesus Himself came not to be served, but to serve (Mark 10:45).
<p>The Walk of Faith</p> <p>Ruth's life is a beautiful picture of both faith and faithfulness. When given the option to return to her own family and their gods, she chose instead to put her faith in the Lord and remain loyal to Naomi. The way of faith and blessing is seldom comfortable, but God's presence is its worthy reward.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Choose faith over the familiar. Orpah returned to her people and her gods, but Ruth chose the God of Israel. Remain steadfast in your loyalty to the Lord; do not turn back to the familiar things of the world. In choosing God and His ways, we can rest in knowing that He will provide for us; He will cover us; and He will redeem us.

<p>Keys to relating to authority</p> <p>Proper relationship to authority is characteristic of godly people. Faithful loving obedience is a key characteristic of such a right response to authority</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Obey legitimate authority. ❖ Believe that GOD will bless such obedience in ways you can not expect
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Praise Points in Ruth

- ❖ Strength he provides during difficult and faithless times (1:1);
- ❖ Relief he grants to those who are hungry and thirsty (1:6);
- ❖ Faithful love of family and friends (1:16);
- ❖ Work that provides food and other necessities (2:7);
- ❖ People who generously help us when we are in need (2:8-9);
- ❖ Special people to whom we grow very close (3:6-13);
- ❖ Children, who bring joy into our life (4:13); and
- ❖ A heritage of faithful believers (4:18-22).

Worship Insights in Ruth

Finding time to worship can seem difficult under the daily stress of a busy schedule. But when you're also alone, grieving, and in danger, worship may be your last priority. These are the conditions that faced Ruth, a Moabite widow in the time of the judges. Ruth's story illustrates the importance of trusting God and worshiping him in the midst of difficult circumstances.

In this book there is no mention of a formal gathering for worship. At no point is the narrative interrupted by a sermon or formal prayer. No priest appears in this story, and in a culture steeped in ritual, only one rite is mentioned—marriage. Yet this book does help us worship. Throughout the story we are given a clear portrait of God as protector, guide, and one who strengthens us and keeps his promises to us—the same attributes we celebrate in worship today. Ruth and Naomi exemplify proper worship as they respond to their circumstances, counting misfortune as God's hand in their lives. They remained faithful to God, and later, when Boaz married Ruth and Obed was born, their faithfulness was rewarded and caused everyone to praise God. Like Ruth and Naomi, we all experience times when we realize our defenselessness and vulnerability. During these times, let us respond with worship, as did Ruth and Naomi,

and recognize that the Lord watches over us. He is able to accomplish great things through the most difficult circumstances.

Life insurance policies and retirement plans did not exist in the days of Ruth, and so many widows in ancient Israel were simply out of luck—and out of protection, work, and sometimes even food. But God provided a way to take care of these women. He instituted the law of the family redeemer (Deuteronomy 25), which provided that a brother of a deceased man would marry and care for his brother's widow. A man who refused to marry his brother's widow was publicly disgraced. All this was intended to provide for Israelite widows. It was according to this law that Boaz “redeemed” Ruth and married her.

Like Ruth, we are in need of a redeemer today. Sin has caused our widowhood, separating us from God and leaving us lost and alone. But Jesus Christ has become our Redeemer. He has claimed and paid for us, redeeming us by his death on the cross and giving us a new family. Praise God that we, too, have a family Redeemer!

- ❖ Being faithful to God is as important in a foreign place as it is in our own familiar community (1:1-5).
- ❖ God can overcome cultural and religious barriers to bring people to himself (1:16).
- ❖ Often when we least expect it, God blesses us, and we should respond with worship (2:20).
- ❖ It is good for older believers to bless younger believers, encouraging them and strengthening them in their walk with God (4:11).
- ❖ God graciously provides for our needs, and we should be thankful (4:15).

An Outline of Ruth

- I. When You're at the End of Your Tether:** [Rth 1:1-22](#)
 - A. Elimelech—A Questionable Decision:** [Rth 1:1-5](#)
 - B. Naomi—A Bitter Experience:** [Rth 1:6-13](#); [Rth 1:19-22](#)
 - C. Ruth—A Growing Faith:** [Rth 1:14-18](#)
- II. The Mechanics of Grace:** [Rth 2:1-23](#)
 - A. Experiencing God's Providence:** [Rth 2:1-10](#)
 - B. Holding on to God's Faithfulness:** [Rth 2:11-12](#)
 - C. Enjoying God's Provision:** [Rth 2:13-23](#)
- III. Acts of Faith and Love:** [Rth 3:1-18](#)

A. Naomi—Following God's Signposts: [Rth 3:1-6](#)

B. Ruth—Trusting God's Protection: [Rth 3:7-9](#)

C. Boaz—Reflecting God's Character: [Rth 3:10-18](#)

IV. There is a Redeemer: [Rth 4:1-22](#)

A. The Heart of the Matter: [Rth 4:1-10](#)

B. The Answer to the Problem: [Rth 4:11-17](#)

C. The Hope for the Future: [Rth 4:18-22](#)