

The Book of Ruth

Author: Unknown; Some attribute it to Samuel

Date:

- Written around 1000 B.C.
- Events likely take place during 12th century (1100's) B.C.
 - Date based on Ruth being King David's great-great-grandmother.
 - Possibility that Ruth was alive during the time of Gideon.
- During the events recorded in the Book of Judges

The Characters, Background & Customs:

- Place in the canon of Scripture:
 - Between Judges and 1st Samuel – Acts as buffer between, and intro for Samuel
 - TaNaK (Hebrew order) – Follows Proverbs: “illustration of the Prov. 31 woman”
 - Is read aloud at the Feast of Pentecost (which commemorates giving of the Law at Sinai) and occurs at the First Fruits of the Harvest offering (Ex. 23:16)
- Abrahamic Covenant – thru Abraham's seed God would bless the world (Gen. 12:1-3)
- Mosaic Covenant – Exodus 19-24
- Israel – Ruled by judges; under the conditions of the Mosaic covenant; God was their king (1 Sam. 8:7).
- Moab – originated from incestuous union between Lot & his daughters (Gen. 19:30-38)
- Levirate marriage – Deut. 25:5-6;
 - Judah & Tamar (Gen. 38) and Perez (Ruth 4:9-12)
- Kinsman-redeemer – Lev. 25
 - **לֹא־יְהִי** “go-el” – to redeem; to deliver; deliverer; redeemer; ransom
 - First used of God towards his people (Gen. 48:16; Ex. 6:6; 15:13)
 - Next used as an Israelite toward his close relative (Lev. 25)
 - Used also as “kinsman, or blood avenger” (Num. 35:10-28; Deut. 19:6, 12)
- God's commands about the poor at harvest time (Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22; Deut. 24:19-22)
- Other commands:
 - Treat the poor with equity (Ex. 23:3, 6; Lev. 19:15; Prov. 22:22-23)
 - With generosity (Lev 19:9-10)
 - Caring for widows (Ex. 22:22-24)
 - Caring for orphans, widows and the alien (Deut. 10:18)
- The meanings of names
 - Bethlehem – house of bread
 - Elimelech – God is King
 - Naomi – pleasant
 - Mara - bitter
 - Malon - puny
 - Chilion - pining
 - Ruth - friendship
 - Orpah – nothing recorded—this meaning is left empty
 - Boaz – relative of Elimelech; “a man of standing” in the community (Ruth 2:1, 3)
 - name means “in him is strength”
 - older than Ruth (2:10)
 - the son of Rahab
 - 5th great grandson of Judah and Tamar

Structure: The story of Naomi's family represents the story of Israel as a whole during the period of the Judges. The cycles of sin (lack of faith), oppression, seeking help, deliverance and peace make up a rough outline of the story.

- I.** Naomi returns to Israel and Ruth, the Moabitess, renounces idolatry. (Ch. 1)
 - A. Naomi's family escapes famine but finds death in Moab.
 - B. The famine is over, so Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem.
 - C. Ruth's declares her **faith** in God and clings fiercely to Naomi.
 - D. Naomi tells old friends to call her Mara, meaning "bitter."
- II.** Ruth reaps favor of Boaz because of her love and loyalty toward Naomi.
 - A. Ruth volunteers to glean in the fields so she and Naomi can eat.
 - B. Boaz praises Ruth's faithfulness and offers her protection and provision.
 - C. Naomi marvels at Boaz's kindness.
 - D. Boaz is a close relative of Naomi.
- III.** Ruth finds rest.
 - A. Naomi plans for Ruth to offer herself as a bride to the elder Boaz.
 - B. Ruth is obedient and Boaz works to make sure Ruth will be Married
 - C. Boaz will marry Ruth a closer relative will "redeem" Ruth.
- IV.** Ruth receives her redemption.
 - A. Boaz convenes court to see if the relative is willing to redeem Ruth.
 - B. Boaz is able and willing to redeem Ruth and her family.
 - C. Ruth and Boaz have a son, Obed.
 - D. Obed is the grandfather of King David!

Themes in Ruth

1. God is bringing his king to Israel
 - Compare Ruth 1:1 to 4:2
2. God intentionally includes Gentiles in his plan of redemption.
 - Rahab and Ruth are both in the family tree of Jesus Christ
3. Ruth & Boaz are examples of faithfulness in the family line of Jesus.
 - Ruth trusts God and embraces his people.
 - Boaz serves as a "kinsman-redeemer" (Hebrew: go-el) in levirate marriage
 - Dt. 25:5-10; Ruth 3:9, 12-13; 4:1, 3-4, 6, 8, 14)
4. Ruth is the example of the "virtuous" or "noble" woman of Prov. 31.
5. Ruth emphasizes the importance of trusting God in the land and returning from exile.
 - Outside the land is barrenness; death.
 - "Return" (Hebrew *shuv*) occurs 15x's (This theme is larger than Kinsman Redeemer)
 - There is a blessing when they return.
6. Ruth anticipates return from exile, coming of Messiah, hope for Gentiles (incl. Moab).
7. Grace and Love: Ruth finds grace in Boaz. Boaz finds love in Ruth.
8. Naomi looks for redemption, and finds it in the son provided to her. We have redemption from the bitter barrenness of sin, and a pleasant new life in the Son, provided to us as our kinsman redeemer: Jesus Christ.