

## **#8. THE BOOK OF RUTH**

1. **Ruth is the story of King David's Great-Grandmother.** It is a love story that sets a stage for the presentation of God's love and care for His Chosen Ones. It took place when Israel was at one of its lowest points. It was a time when people lived to please themselves, not Jehovah (see Judges 17:6). Ruth and Esther are the only books of the Bible that derive their name from a woman. The name Ruth probably means "friendship".

2. **The author is unknown, but Jewish tradition attributes the work to Samuel.** This is certainly possible since Samuel did not die until after he had anointed David as king (1 Samuel 16:6-13; 25:1). Working backward from the birth of David, the story probably took place about 1126 -1100 BC during the Judgeship of Jair (Judges 10:3-5). The story covers a period of about 12 years (one year in Moab; less than a year of gleaning; then a subsequent year in Bethlehem).

3. **The three main characters are diverse in personality and circumstance.**

- Naomi was a widow who lost her husband and two sons after an ill-advised move away from the Promised Land during a time of famine.
- Ruth was a Gentile from Moab. She had been widowed after a brief marriage to one of Naomi's sons. Her decision to remain with her mother-in-law and serve Jehovah set the stage for blessings she could not have imagined.
- Boaz was a wealthy land-owner in Israel. A man of integrity, piety, and compassion, he was faithful to remain in the Land even in times of great difficulty.

4. **Key Chapters**

- Chapter 1 - is the account of Naomi and how her circumstances developed.
- Chapter 2 - is the story of Ruth in the field of Boaz.
- Chapter 3 - is the advice Naomi offered to help her daughter-in-law win the heart of Boaz.
- Chapter 4 - Ruth and Boaz are married.

5. **Key Verses**

- **Ruth 1:16 NIV** - "But Ruth replied, 'Don't ask me to leave you and turn back.

Wherever you go, I will go; wherever you live, I will live. Your people will be my people, and your God will be my God.”

- **Ruth 1:21 NIV** - “I went away full, but The Lord has brought me home empty.”

## 6. Key People

- The story is laid out in four simple scenes. Naomi, Ruth and Boaz are the individuals around whom each scene develops (see point 3 above).

## 7. Key Places

- Moab - the land east of the Jordan River and Dead Sea.
- Bethlehem - the hometown of Naomi. She and Ruth returned to the community and began gleaning in the fields of Boaz.

## 8. Key Themes

- ***The Land was God’s gift to Israel*** - although famine had come because of Israel’s sin, the citizens of Israel had been commanded in The Law to remain in the Land and repent when such difficulties arose. Naomi recognized that she and her family had left the Land with riches, probably due to fear. She lost it all, and returned to the Land empty.
- ***God’s mercy, faithfulness and steadfast love is unfailing*** - *Though she thought her life was over, God still had days of blessing for Naomi.*
- ***God is able to overthrow the difficulties into which we fall*** - our failures need never be terminal.
- ***God’s love and blessing is for the Gentiles as well*** - Even the Moabite woman known as Ruth became an important part of the Gospel. She is mentioned as an ancestor of Jesus in Matthew 1:5.

## 9. The Contents of Ruth

- The Ruin of Elimelech and Naomi in Moab (1:1-5)
- Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem (1:6-22)
- Boaz allows Ruth to glean in his field (2:1-23)
- The romance of Ruth and Boaz (3:1-18)
- God Blesses Boaz and Ruth with a son (4:13-17)

• The Kingship of David (4:18-22)

• **Worth noting:**

- Boaz is seen as a type (representation) of Christ as our Kinsman-Redeemer. The word “Redeemer” occurs 13 times in the text of Ruth.
  - Boaz was a blood relative. Christ fulfilled this according to Galatians 4:4,5; Hebrews 2:16,17.
  - Boaz had the necessary resources to redeem what had been lost. Christ is seen doing this as well according to 1 Corinthians 6:20 and 1 Peter 1:18,19.
  - Boaz was willing to redeem. Christ mirrored this attitude in John 10:15-18 and 1 John 3:16.
- Boaz was a descendant of Abraham, Judah, and Perez. Ruth was from the lineage of Lot.

• **When reading Ruth:**

- Remember that the story occurred in the darkest days of the young nation’s history. With God, even the darkest days have rays of hope!
- The story is told in four scenes, with each section beginning with a thematic sentence. Each section (except the last one) also ends with a preparatory summary statement that leads into the next scene.
- Jewish tradition states that Naomi became nanny to her grandson and saw him grow to maturity.