
Ruth

Foundations of the Faith

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Ruth

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OUTLINE

Author	Unknown (Jewish tradition is Samuel; some believe it was written during the reign of David)
Focus	Ruth's Love Demonstrated and Rewarded
Key Word	Kinsman-Redeemer (13X)
Key Verses	Ruth 1:16 Ruth 3:11
Key Chapter	Ruth 4
Location	Moab & Bethlehem
Time	c. 12 Years
Naomi Widowed: (1:1 – 1:5)	
Ruth's Love Demonstrated: (1:6 – 2:23)	
	Ruth's Loyalty
	Ruth's Devotion and Care for Naomi
Ruth's Love Rewarded: (3:1 – 4:22)	
	Ruth's Request for Redemption by Boaz
	Ruth's Reward of Redemption by Boaz

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Introduction

The time of the Judges was tumultuous, one of disobedience and idolatry. The Bible tells, upon the death of Joshua and the elders “*who had seen all the great works of the LORD,*” the generation that followed “*did not know the LORD,*” and the people “*followed other gods from among the gods of the people who were all around them*” (Judges 2:7-14). As a result, the Lord fulfilled the words He had spoken by Moses in the giving of His law, and sent plagues, droughts, and adversaries against the land.

Judges 2:7-10: The people served the LORD all the days of Joshua, and all the days of the elders who survived Joshua, who had seen all the great work of the LORD which He had done for Israel. 8 Then Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of the LORD, died at the age of one hundred and ten. 9 And they buried him in the territory of his inheritance in Timnath-heres, in the hill country of Ephraim, north of Mount Gaash. 10 All that generation also were gathered to their fathers; and there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD, nor yet the work which He had done for Israel.

Ruth, however, portrays a different aspect of life in Israel at the time of the Judges. Although a foreigner by birth, (she was a Moabitess), Ruth demonstrates the character of a child of God – she helps and assists for those that are hurting; she places others before herself; she chooses to forsake her life to follow the true and living God, exhibiting an uncommon faith and loyalty in Israel at that time.

The key character in this story is Boaz, not Ruth. Boaz portrays a type of Christ: the kinsman-redeemer; the faithful one; the loving, caring provider for the weak, the outcast, the downtrodden, and the faithful. The Lord rewards both Boaz and Ruth in that they become the great-grandparents of David and are in the line of the Lord Jesus Christ. ***Ruth 4:18-22; Matthew 1:1,5***

The concept of kinsman-redeemer, used 13 times in the small book of Ruth, is an important type of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is our kinsman-redeemer. To fulfill the role of a redeemer, the kinsman must meet four qualifications. ***Deuteronomy 25:5-10***

Deuteronomy 25:5-6: "When brothers live together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the deceased shall not be married outside the family to a strange man. Her husband's brother shall go in to her and take her to himself as wife and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 "It shall be that the firstborn whom she bears shall assume the name of his dead brother, so that his name will not be blotted out from Israel.

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1. Related by blood to those he redeems: *Romans 1:1-3; Philippians 2:5-7; Hebrews 2:14, 15*

Romans 1:1-3: Paul, a bond-servant of Christ Jesus, called as an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, 2 which He promised beforehand through His prophets in the holy Scriptures, 3 concerning His Son, who was born of a descendant of David according to the flesh

Philippians 2:5-8: Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6 who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7 but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. 8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

Hebrews 2:14-15: Therefore, since the children share in flesh and blood, He Himself likewise also partook of the same, that through death He might render powerless him who had the power of death, that is, the devil, 15 and might free those who through fear of death were subject to slavery all their lives

2. Able to pay the price of the redemption: *1 Peter 1:18, 19*

1 Peter 1:18-19: knowing that you were not redeemed with perishable things like silver or gold from your futile way of life inherited from your forefathers, 19 but with precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ.

3. Be willing to pay the price of redemption: *Matthew 20:28; John 10:14-18*

Matthew 20:28: just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many

John 10:14-18: "I am the good shepherd, and I know My own and My own know Me, 15 even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep. ... 17 "For this reason the Father loves Me, because I lay down My life so that I may take it again. 18 "No one has taken it away from Me, but I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This commandment I received from My Father."

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4. Be free himself (Christ was free from the curse of sin).

2 Corinthians 5:21: He made Him who knew no sin to be sin on our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

1 Peter 2:21-22: For you have been called for this purpose, since Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example for you to follow in His steps, 22 WHO COMMITTED NO SIN, NOR WAS ANY DECEIT FOUND IN HIS MOUTH;

1 John 3:5: You know that He appeared in order to take away sins; and in Him there is no sin.

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Naomi Widowed

Ruth 1:1-5: Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons. 2 The name of the man was Elimelech, and the name of his wife, Naomi; and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion, Ephrathites of Bethlehem in Judah. Now they entered the land of Moab and remained there. 3 Then Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died; and she was left with her two sons. 4 They took for themselves Moabite women as wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. And they lived there about ten years. 5 Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died, and the woman was bereft of her two children and her husband. NASU

In the opening of the book of Ruth, the time, place, and most of the characters of the events are established. First, we are given the time of the story, which takes place during the period of the judges, following the death of Joshua and the elders of his time and preceding the Lord raising up the prophet Samuel. Based on the information provided in Ruth, it appears all the events of the story occurred near the conclusion of the era of the Judges, around 1100 B.C. ***Micah 5:2; Matthew 2:1-6***

Micah 5:2: "But as for you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you One will go forth for Me to be ruler in Israel. His goings forth are from long ago, from the days of eternity."

Matthew 2:1-6: Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 2 "Where is He who has been born King of the Jews? For we saw His star in the east and have come to worship Him." 3 When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. 4 Gathering together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah was to be born. 5 They said to him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for this is what has been written by the prophet: 6'AND YOU, BETHLEHEM, LAND OF JUDAH, ARE BY NO MEANS LEAST AMONG THE LEADERS OF JUDAH; FOR OUT OF YOU SHALL COME FORTH A RULER WHO WILL SHEPHERD MY PEOPLE ISRAEL.'"

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Secondly, we learn of the setting or situation at that time in the land of Israel, there was famine. Although the famine affected the entire land of Israel, the focus of the book of Ruth zeros in on Judah and specifically the town of Bethlehem, situated approximately five miles south of Jerusalem. The irony in the story is Bethlehem means, “house of bread” but there was no bread; Judah means “praise” but the people, in their sin, were not praising God. Famines were common in the land, as God had warned the people in His word that if they sinned, famine would be one of the judgments He would bring on the land. It was a known consequence of disobedience to God's commands. By the end of the story of Ruth, Bethlehem is a “house of bread” and Judah is a place of “praise.” **Deuteronomy 11:13-17**

Deuteronomy 11:13-17: "It shall come about, if you listen obediently to my commandments which I am commanding you today, to love the LORD your God and to serve Him with all your heart and all your soul, 14 that He will give the rain for your land in its season, the early and late rain, that you may gather in your grain and your new wine and your oil. 15 "He will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. 16 "Beware that your hearts are not deceived, and that you do not turn away and serve other gods and worship them. 17 "Or the anger of the LORD will be kindled against you, and He will shut up the heavens so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its fruit; and you will perish quickly from the good land which the LORD is giving you.

Finally, we are introduced to most of the characters, *a certain man*, his wife, and their two sons, their situation, and nature. Although the story could be about any number of men in Israel at the time, as the Nation was living without God (exemplified by the famine as a judgment of God for national disobedience), God’s focus is on a specific, or *certain man*, Elimelech and his wife, Naomi and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, whose names meant sickly and wasting.

Elimelech moved his family out of Judah and into the land of Moab in an attempt to escape the famine. In Psalms 108:9, God describes Moab as His washpot or garbage can. Elimelech moved his family from the “house of bread” and place of “praise” to eat out of garbage can. Moab was a son of Lot, through Lot’s incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter. The Moabites had hired Balaam to curse Israel, during Israel's pilgrimage to Canaan and as a result, God, as a normal rule, forbade the Moabites from participating in things of Israel. **Genesis 19:36-37; Numbers 22:1-8; Deuteronomy 2:8-9; 23:3-6; Psalms 108:9; 2 Peter 2:7-8**

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Numbers 22:1-8: Then the sons of Israel journeyed, and camped in the plains of Moab beyond the Jordan opposite Jericho. 2 Now Balak the son of Zippor saw all that Israel had done to the Amorites. 3 So Moab was in great fear because of the people, for they were numerous; and Moab was in dread of the sons of Israel. 4 Moab said to the elders of Midian, "Now this horde will lick up all that is around us, as the ox licks up the grass of the field." And Balak the son of Zippor was king of Moab at that time. 5 So he sent messengers to Balaam the son of Beor, at Pethor, which is near the River, in the land of the sons of his people, to call him, saying, "Behold, a people came out of Egypt; behold, they cover the surface of the land, and they are living opposite me. 6 "Now, therefore, please come, curse this people for me since they are too mighty for me; perhaps I may be able to defeat them and drive them out of the land. For I know that he whom you bless is blessed, and he whom you curse is cursed." 7 So the elders of Moab and the elders of Midian departed with the fees for divination in their hand; and they came to Balaam and repeated Balak's words to him. 8 He said to them, "Spend the night here, and I will bring word back to you as the LORD may speak to me." And the leaders of Moab stayed with Balaam.

Deuteronomy 23:3-6: "No Ammonite or Moabite shall enter the assembly of the LORD; none of their descendants, even to the tenth generation, shall ever enter the assembly of the LORD, 4 because they did not meet you with food and water on the way when you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam the son of Beor from Pethor of Mesopotamia, to curse you. 5 "Nevertheless, the LORD your God was not willing to listen to Balaam, but the LORD your God turned the curse into a blessing for you because the LORD your God loves you. 6 "You shall never seek their peace or their prosperity all your days.

Psalms 108:9: Moab is My washpot; over Edom I will cast My shoe; over Philistia I will triumph."

2 Peter 2:7-8: and delivered righteous Lot, who was oppressed by the filthy conduct of the wicked 8(for that righteous man, dwelling among them, tormented his righteous soul from day to day by seeing and hearing their lawless deeds)

Deuteronomy 2:8-9: "So we passed beyond our brothers the sons of Esau, who live in Seir, away from the Arabah road, away from Elath and from Ezion-geber. And we turned and passed through by the way of the wilderness of Moab. 9 "Then the LORD said to me, "Do not harass Moab, nor provoke them to war, for I will not give you any of their land as a possession, because I have given Ar to the sons of Lot as a possession.

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Elimelech's exodus from Judah to another country in search of food during a famine is similar to the actions of both Abraham and Isaac. As with both patriarchs, Elimelech's actions demonstrated his lack of faith in God to honor His word. Elimelech did what seemed reasonable, humanly speaking, but it was in direct contradiction to the expressed word of God; they were to stay in the land and serve God. If they were obedient, they would not need to search out their sustenance. As with the disobedience of the patriarchs, Elimelech's disobedience did not turn out well; Naomi ended up widowed and childless. After Elimelech died, her sons married, "*the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth,*" and lived in Moab with Naomi for about ten years; both sons died childless. **Genesis 12:10, 26:1-2**

Genesis 12:10: Now there was a famine in the land, and Abram went down to Egypt to dwell there, for the famine was severe in the land.

Genesis 26:1-3: There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. 2 Then the LORD appeared to him and said: "Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. 3 Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father.