

Ruth

MEANING: Friendship” or “association.”

AUTHOR: Uncertain

TIME WRITTEN: Uncertain

POSITION IN THE BIBLE:

- 8th Book in the Bible
- 8th book in the Old Testament
- 3rd of 12 books of History
- 7 have preceded it. 58 to follow it.

CHAPTERS: 4

VERSES: 85

WORDS: 2,578

KEY WORD: Kinsman-Redeemer

1. Appears 13 times in Ruth and basically means “one who redeems.”
2. By buying back the land of Naomi, as well as marrying Ruth and fathering a son to keep the family line alive, Boaz acts as a redeemer.

TWO KEY PASSAGES:

1. **Ruth 1:16** - Ruth said: "Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. "
2. **Ruth 3:11** - now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman.

KEY CHAPTER: Ruth 4

1. In twenty-two short verses, Ruth moves from widowhood and poverty to marriage and wealth. (2:1)
2. In exercising the law of regulating the redemption of property (Leviticus 25:25-34) and the law concerning a brother's duty to raise us seed (children) in the name of the deceased (Deuteronomy 25:5-10), Boaz brings a Moabite woman into the family line of David and eventually of Jesus Christ.

OBSERVATIONS ABOUT RUTH:

1. Ruth is a story of love, devotion, and redemption set in the days of the Judges.
2. Basically, it is the story of a Moabite woman who forsakes her pagan heritage in order to cling to the people of Israel. Because of her faithfulness in a time of national unfaithfulness, God rewards her by giving her a new husband (Boaz), a son (Obed), and a privileged position in the lineage of David and Christ. She is the great grandmother of David.
3. The book of Ruth is divided into four distinct settings.
 - a. 1st setting: The country of Moab. (1:1-18)
 - b. 2nd setting: A field in Bethlehem. (1:19 - 2:23)
 - c. 3rd setting: A threshing floor in Bethlehem. (3:1-18)
 - d. 4th setting: The city of Bethlehem. (4:1-22)
4. Ruth is a virtuous woman. (3:11)
5. Love is demonstrated in chapters 1 and 2 and is rewarded in chapters 3 and 4.
6. The story begins with a famine in Israel, a sign of disobedience and apostasy. An Israelite named Elimelech moves from Bethlehem (House of Bread"—note the irony) to

Moab. Although he seeks life in that land, he and his two sons Nahlon and Chilion find only death. The deceased sons leave behind two Moabite widows, Orpah and Ruth. Elimelech's widow Naomi hears that the famine in Israel is over and decides to return, no longer as Naomi ("Pleasant" but as Mara ("Bitterness")). She tells her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab and remarry since there was no security for an unmarried woman in those days. Orpah chooses to leave Naomi and is never mentioned again. Ruth, on the other hand resolves to cling to Naomi and follow Yahweh, the God of Israel. In doing so, she gives up her culture, people, and language, because of her love. Naomi's misfortune leads her to think God is her enemy, but He has plans she does not yet realize. In her plight, she must let Ruth glean at the edge of a field. This is a humiliating and task because of the character of many of these reapers. God's providential care brings her to the field of Boaz. Boaz begins to love, protect, and provide for her. Boaz takes no further steps toward marriage, so Naomi follows the accepted custom of that day and requests that Boaz exercise his right as kinsmen-redeemer. In Ruth 3:10-13, Boaz reveals why he has taken no action: He is older than Ruth (perhaps twenty years her senior), and he is not the nearest kinsman. Nevertheless, God rewards Ruth's devotion by giving her Boaz as a husband and by providing her with a son, Obed, the grandfather of David.

SUMMARY OF RUTH

INTRODUCTION:

- A. Ruth is the story of a virtuous woman who lives above the norm of her day.
 - 1. Although the book may have been written during the time of David, the events take place during the time of the judges.
 - 2. This period in Israel's history was generally a desert of rebellion and immorality, but the story of Ruth stands in contrast as an oasis of integrity and righteousness.
- B. Ruth is "a virtuous woman" (3:11) who shows loyal love to her mother-in-law Naomi and her near- kinsman Boaz. In both relationships, goodness and love are clearly manifested.
- C. There are two divisions in the Book of Ruth.
 - 1. Love is demonstrated in chapters 1 & 2
 - 2. Love is rewarded in chapters 3 & 4

RUTH'S LOVE IS DEMONSTRATED. (1-2)

- A. The story begins with a famine in Israel, a sign of disobedience and apostasy.
 - 1. An Israelite named Elimelech ("My God is King" in a desperate act moves from Bethlehem ("House of Bread" - note the irony) to Moab.
 - 2. Although he seeks life in that land, he and his two sons, Mahlon ("Sick") and Chilion ("Pining") find only death.
 - 3. The deceased sons leave two Moabite widows, Orpah ("Stubbornness") and Ruth ("Friendship").
 - 4. Elimelech's widow, Naomi, hears that the famine in Israel is over and decides to return, no longer as Naomi ("Pleasant" but as Mara ("Bitter")).
 - a. She tells her daughters-in-law to remain in Moab and remarry since there was no security for an unmarried woman in those days.
 - b. Orpah chooses to leave Naomi and is never mentioned again.

- c. Ruth, on the other hand, resolves to cling to Naomi and follow Yahweh, the God of Israel.
- d. Ruth gives up her culture, people, and language because of her love.
- B. Naomi's misfortune leads her to think that God is her enemy, but He has plans she does not yet realize.
 - 1. In her plight, she must let Ruth glean at the edge of a field.
 - 2. This is a humiliating and dangerous task because of the character of many of the reapers.
 - 3. However, God's providential care brings her to the field of Boaz, Naomi's kinsman.
 - 4. Boaz ("In His is Strength") begins to love, protect, and provide for her.

RUTH'S LOVE IS REWARDED. (3-4)

- A. Boaz takes no further steps toward marriage, so Naomi follows the accepted customs of the day and requests that Boaz exercise his right as kinsman-redeemer.
 - 1. Boaz reveals two reasons why he has taken no action.
 - a. He is older than Ruth. (Perhaps twenty years her senior)
 - b. He is not the nearest kinsman.
 - 2. Nevertheless, God rewards Ruth's devotion in two significant ways:
 - a. By giving her Boaz as a husband.
 - b. By providing her with a son, Obed, the grandfather of David.
- B. The Book of Ruth is indeed a cameo love story of love, devotion, and redemption nestled in the context of the days of the judges.