

Ruth and the Glory of God (Genesis-1 Samuel)

The Book of Ruth exists to display God's glory:

1. In a Genealogy (Ruth 4:18-22)

Order: The full genealogy from Adam through David is not included (only ten). The genealogy divides Israel into two periods: Perez to Moses (Perez to Nashon) and Moses to David (Salmon to David).

- Perez: Perez is the older twin (Zerah is the younger) from the inappropriate relationship between Tamar and Judah. The narrator begins with Perez, and not Judah, potentially because of the unethical consummation between Tamar and her father-in-law, Judah.
- Hezron: not much is known about him other than he was born in Canaan and migrated with Jacob to Egypt (Gen. 46:12). The descendants from Hezron settled in southern Judah following the Exodus (Num. 26:21; Josh. 15:3).
- Ram: the son of Hezron. Very little is noted about him in Scripture (1 Chr. 2:9; Matt. 1:4; Luke 3:33).
- Amminadab: the son of Ram whose name means "my kinsman is generous" and the father-in-law of Aaron the high priest (Ex. 6:23) and father of Nashon.
- Nashon and Salmon: nothing noteworthy is mentioned about them.

The narrator, Chronicler, Matthew, and Luke do not insert Elimelech and Mahlon in the genealogy. Boaz perpetuates the name of the dead only in the inheritance of the estate.

Numerical Theme:

- Ten: The number ten in Scripture is often associated with the number of completion (plagues and commandments). Ten names are mentioned from v.18-22. The family of Elimelech spent ten years in Moab. Tracing the lineage back to Adam, Noah is the tenth, Abraham is the twentieth, and Boaz is the thirtieth. David is the tenth genealogy listed by the narrator.
- Seven: Boaz is listed seventh in the genealogy. The same is true of Enoch (Gen. 5:21-24). Both Enoch and Boaz walked with the LORD. David is the seventh son of Jesse (1 Chron. 2:13-15). Boaz and David, thematically, are similar in character.

Placement: In Scripture, the genealogy is typically placed in the beginning (6:9; 10:1; 11:10, 27; 25:19; 36:1, 9; 37:2; Num. 3:1; 1 Chr. 1:29; Matthew 1:1-17). In Ruth, it is at the end.

2. In its Location within the Old Testament Canon

Why is Ruth placed in between Judges and 1 Samuel?

Judges:

- A season of political, social, and spiritual upheaval for the nation of Israel.
- Every judge, since Othniel, has become increasingly unstable.
- The tribe of Benjamin has brought about division with the other tribes (including Judah) because of the unspeakable crimes committed against the Levite's concubine by the Benjaminites while in Gibeah. A civil war erupted between Benjamin and the tribes of Israel (Judges 19-21).

1 Samuel:

- Begins with a barren woman (like Ruth and Naomi) who will give birth to a special son. God grants conception to both Ruth and Hannah (1 Sam. 1:19-20; Ruth 4:13).
- While the nation prematurely requests a king (1 Sam. 8), the LORD had already sent Saul (1 Sam. 9:16), the son of Kish, a Benjaminites (1 Sam. 9:1-2) on a wild donkey chase. Saul, as king, was unable to unite the tribe of Israel (11:7-8; 15:4; 17:54; 18:16).

- No one, including Samuel, expected that David, a lowly shepherd boy and youngest son of Jesse, would be anointed as the LORD's king (15:6-11).
- Jesse's and David's Moabite blood (through Ruth) may have procured favor for them from the king of Moab (22:3-4).

Ruth:

- In large measures, this novella is a breath of "fresh air" from the lawlessness of the time of Judges. The LORD is synergizing human decisions to further His agenda.
- This is typical of the LORD, as He chose Abel, and not Cain - Abraham, not Nahor - Isaac, not Ishmael - Jacob, not Esau - Joseph, not Reuben - Boaz, not Peloni Almoni.

3. In the Allusions and Motifs to Genesis

1. Migration of a famine advances God's plan (Gen. 12-13; Ruth 1:1).
2. A family's survival is compromised by a mother's childlessness (Gen. 16-17; 25:21; 29:31; 30; Ruth 1:5).
3. A foreigner, voluntarily, permanently immigrates to a new land (Gen. 12:1-5; Ruth 1:17; 2:11).
4. A woman, who is protected, will birth the son of destiny (Gen. 12:17; 20:3; 26:7; 34:1-31; Ruth 2:8, 9, 22).
5. Betrothal-type scene (Gen. 24; Ruth 2:20).
6. Female initiative to strategize producing an heir because of male inactivity (Gen. 38; Ruth 3:1-7).
7. The purchase of a property because of a death (Gen. 23:3; Ruth 4:3, 9).
8. The assimilation and integration of foreigners into their new homeland (Gen. 14; 20; 21:22-34; 23; 26; 34; Ruth 2:10-12; 3:11; 4:10, 11, 13).
9. Marriage to a foreigner produces a ruling family (Gen. 38; 41:45, 50-52; 48; Ruth 4:13).
10. The divine gift of conception in granting a son (Gen. 21:1-2; 25:21; 29, 31; 30: 17; 30:22, 23; Judg. 13; Ruth 4:12; 1 Sam. 1:19-20).

The writer wants us to associate the events of Genesis with the events of Ruth: God singles out a family, as He did with Abraham, Sarah, Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, Rachel, Leah, Hannah, Tamar, Judah, Perez, Elimelech, Mahlon, Ruth, Boaz, Obed, and David).

4. In Faithful Living

- The LORD has rewarded Boaz and Ruth, two upright individuals (2:1; 3:11) and by extension, others (Naomi, the women, and the elders). Scripture testifies that God rewards righteous living (2 Sam. 22:20-25; Ps. 18:20; Prov. 11:18; 13:21; 15:29; Gal. 6:9; James 5:16; 1 Peter 3:7).

5. In Demonstrating God's Character

- Hesed love: Boaz and Ruth demonstrated this "kindness" (1:8; 2:20; 3:10) through acts of mercy, grace, kindness, loyalty, covenant commitment, and devotion.
- Providence: the deliberate, intentional, and calculated choices of men and women advance God's agenda. There are no signs, miracles, wonders, or supernatural acts from the LORD.
- Redemption: Boaz was a redeemer to the family of Elimelech and was not required by law to marry Ruth. Obed was the redeemer of Naomi (4:15) in that her hope "has been restored" to fullness. Obed will provide for Naomi in her old age. Ruth and Boaz are only shadows of the true redemption wrought by Jesus Christ: not in the acquisition of land, but through the atonement and forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ.