

# The Message of the Old Testament

## A Book-by-Book Study

### RUTH

#### Background

The book is named for its main character, Ruth, a \_\_\_\_\_ widow who married the Bethlehemite Boaz. The author of Ruth is never named in the Bible. According to rabbinic tradition (Babylonian Talmud, Baba Bathra 14a–15b), Samuel is the author. This is unlikely, however, since Samuel died before David actually became king, and Ruth 4:17–22 implies that David’s kingship was an established fact at the time of writing. (ESV Study Bible)

The mention of David (4:17) and his genealogy (4:18–22) places the writing after David’s accession to the throne (2 Samuel 2) in c. 1010 b.c. The narrator’s explanation of a custom once current “in former times in Israel” (Ruth 4:7) distances him from the story’s events, which occurred “in the days when the judges ruled” (1:1). Therefore, the book could have been written any time after 1010 b.c. by an author using accurate oral or written material as historical sources. (ESV Study Bible)

#### How We Got Here

- ▶ God \_\_\_\_\_ Abraham a people and the land
- ▶ Moses led the people to the land
- ▶ Joshua led the people to conquer the land
- ▶ Judges sets before us life in the land
- ▶ Ruth takes place during the time of the \_\_\_\_\_

#### Contents of Ruth

- Introduction: Naomi Widowed in a Foreign Land (1:1–5)
- Scene 1: Ruth Moves to Bethlehem with Naomi (1:6–22)
- Scene 2: Ruth Gleans in Boaz’s Field (2:1–23)
- Scene 3: Ruth Seeks Redemption from Boaz (3:1–18)
- Scene 4: Boaz Arranges Redemption (4:1–12)
- Conclusion: Naomi Blessed with a New Family (4:13–17)
- Genealogy: Extended Blessing (4:18–22)



#### Introduction

Ruth 1:1-5 --- In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons. 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. They were Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah. They went into the country of Moab and remained there. But Elimelech, the husband of Naomi, died, and she was left with her two sons. These took Moabite wives; the name of the one was Orpah and the name of the other Ruth. They lived there about ten years, and both Mahlon and Chilion died, so that the woman was left without her two sons and her husband.

These were Dark Days

1. The days when the judges ruled . . .

Judges 2:10-15 --- And all [Joshua’s] generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the Lord or the work that he had done for Israel.

And the people of Israel did what was evil in the sight of the Lord and served the Baals. And they abandoned the Lord, the God of their fathers, who had brought them out of the land of Egypt. They went after other gods, from among the gods of the peoples who were around them, and bowed down to them.

And they provoked the Lord to anger. They abandoned the Lord and served the Baals and the Ashtaroth. So the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he gave them over to plunderers, who plundered them. And he sold them into the hand of their surrounding enemies, so that they could no longer withstand their enemies. Whenever they marched out, the hand of the Lord was against them for harm, as the Lord had warned, and as the Lord had sworn to them. And they were in terrible distress.

Judges 21:25 ---

In those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was \_\_\_\_\_ in his \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Days of . . . \_\_\_\_\_

3. The Land of \_\_\_\_\_

1. \_\_\_\_\_ fathered the Moabites by his elder daughter (Genesis 19:30).

2. During the wilderness wandering, men of Israel went after the daughters of Moab and their false gods (Numbers 25:1-2).

3. The Lord had \_\_\_\_\_ any descendant of Moab from entering his assembly or the making of any treaty with Moabites because they did not meet Israel with bread and water on the way when they came out of Egypt, and because they hired against them Balaam to curse them (Dt. 23:3-6).

4. Moab was among the enemies of Israel which oppressed them during the days of the judges (Judges 3:12-14).

4. Days of Death and Sorrow

Elimelech died  
Sons took Moabite wives  
Both sons died

Ruth 1:19-20 --- When [Naomi and Ruth] came to Bethlehem, the whole town was stirred because of them. And the women said, "Is this Naomi?" She said to them, "Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very \_\_\_\_\_ with me.

## Themes in the Book of Ruth

### Kindness

1:7-13 — So she set out from the place where she was with her two daughters-in-law, and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah. But Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, "Go, return each of you to her mother's house. May the Lord deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. The Lord grant that you may find rest, each of you in the house of her husband!" Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. And they said to her, "No, we will return with you to your people." But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Have I yet sons in my womb that they may become your husbands? Turn back, my daughters; go your way, for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, even if I should have a husband this night and should bear sons, would you therefore wait till they were grown? Would you therefore refrain from marrying? No, my daughters, for it is exceedingly bitter to me for your sake that the hand of the Lord has gone out against me."

### Kindness in Orpah

She weeps for Naomi  
She offers to \_\_\_\_\_ with Naomi  
Naomi describes her support as kindness

### Kindness in Naomi

She prays for Orpah and Ruth  
That God would bestow \_\_\_\_\_ on them  
That they would find rest in the home of another \_\_\_\_\_

### Kindness in Ruth

1:14b-17 — And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth \_\_\_\_\_ to her. And she said, “See, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.” But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your \_\_\_\_\_ my \_\_\_\_\_. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you.”

### Kindness in Boaz

2:8-9 — Then Boaz said to Ruth, “Now, listen, my daughter, do not go to glean in \_\_\_\_\_ field or leave this one, but keep close to my young women. Let your eyes be on the field that they are reaping, and go after them. Have I not charged the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink what the young men have drawn.”

2:14-16 — And at mealtime Boaz said to her, “Come here and \_\_\_\_\_ and dip your morsel in the wine.” So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed to her roasted grain. And she ate until she was satisfied, and she had some left over. When she rose to glean, Boaz instructed his young men, saying, “Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. And also pull out some from the bundles for her and leave it for her to glean, and do not rebuke her.”

### The Providence of God

1:6 --- Then she arose with her daughters-in-law to return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the fields of Moab that the \_\_\_\_\_ had visited his people and \_\_\_\_\_ them food.

1:20-21 --- And the women said, “Is this Naomi?” She said to them, “Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the \_\_\_\_\_ very bitterly with me. I went away full and the Lord has brought me back empty. Why call me Naomi when the Lord has testified against me and the Almighty has brought calamity upon me?”

2:1-3 --- Now Naomi had a relative of her husband’s, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz. And Ruth the Moabite said to Naomi, “Let me go to the field and glean among the ears of grain after him in whose sight I shall find favor.” And she said to her, “Go, my daughter.” So she set out and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers, and she \_\_\_\_\_ to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the clan of Elimelech.

4:13 --- So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord \_\_\_\_\_ her conception, and she bore a son.

### Redemption

2:1 --- Now Naomi had a \_\_\_\_\_ of her husband’s, a worthy man of the clan of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

3:1 --- Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, “My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you? Is not Boaz our \_\_\_\_\_,

3:8-13 --- At midnight the man was startled and turned over, and behold, a woman lay at his feet! He said, “Who are you?” And she answered, “I am Ruth, your servant. Spread your \_\_\_\_\_ over your servant, for you are a \_\_\_\_\_.” And he said, “May you be blessed by the Lord, my daughter. You have made this last kindness greater than the first in that you have not gone after young men, whether poor or rich. And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask, for all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. And now it is true that I am a redeemer. Yet there is a redeemer nearer than I. Remain tonight, and in the morning, if he will redeem you, good; let him do it. But if he is not willing to redeem you, then, as the Lord lives, I will redeem you. Lie down until the morning.”

4:1-6 --- Now Boaz had gone up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the redeemer, of whom Boaz had spoken, came by. So Boaz said, “Turn aside, friend; sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down. Then he said to the redeemer, “Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that

belonged to our relative Elimelech. So I thought I would tell you of it and say, 'Buy it in the presence of those sitting here and in the presence of the elders of my people.' If you will redeem it, redeem it. But if you will not, tell me, that I may know, for there is no one besides you to redeem it, and I come after you." And he said, "I will redeem it." Then Boaz said, "The day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you also acquire Ruth the Moabite, the widow of the dead, in order to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance." Then the redeemer said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I impair my own inheritance. Take my \_\_\_\_\_ of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

4:9-10 --- Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and to Mahlon. Also Ruth the Moabite, the widow of Mahlon, I have bought to be my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead in his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his native place. You are witnesses this day."

Three requirements for a redeemer:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ (relationship)
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

The nearest relative had the first right and apparently had the resources but did not have the \_\_\_\_\_. Boaz, on the other hand had all three.

## Signs of Hope

The events of the book are set in the darkest of days. The circumstances of Naomi's and Ruth's lives were \_\_\_\_\_. Those circumstances reflected the circumstances of Israel as well. But notes of hope are sounded through the book.

Ruth's loyalty to Naomi including her adoption of Naomi's \_\_\_\_\_ as her own.

Ruth 1:22 --- So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabite her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of \_\_\_\_\_ harvest.

Ruth's gleaning in the fields of Boaz (by "happenstance").

Boaz's remarkable \_\_\_\_\_.

The refusal of the other kinsman to \_\_\_\_\_ Elimelech's land.

The birth of a \_\_\_\_\_.

The descendant of the son was \_\_\_\_\_.

## Joy

4:13-17

So Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And he went in to her, and the Lord gave her conception, and she bore a son. Then the women said to Naomi, "Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without a redeemer, and his name be renowned in Israel! He shall be to you a restorer of \_\_\_\_\_ and a nourisher of your old age, for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven \_\_\_\_\_, has given birth to him." Then Naomi took the child and laid him on her lap and became his nurse. And the women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, "A son has been born to Naomi." They named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.

## Faithfulness

1:16-17 --- But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you \_\_\_\_\_ I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be \_\_\_\_\_ people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

## Lessons to be Learned

### 1. God brings hope out of \_\_\_\_\_.

Naomi and Ruth could hardly have been more hopeless, but God was gloriously at work. And His work concerned not only Naomi and Ruth but also Boaz and also Israel and also \_\_\_\_\_!

He is sovereign over all and although He does not necessarily work things out the way \_\_\_ would, He always does what is \_\_\_\_\_ for His people.

Romans 8:28 --- And we know that for those who love God \_\_\_\_\_ things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Do not judge God's ways only by what we can \_\_\_\_\_ with our eyes. Hear the words of William Cowper's hymn:

God moves in a \_\_\_\_\_ way his wonders to perform;  
He plants His footsteps in the sea and rides upon the storm.

Deep in unfathomable mines of never-failing skill,  
He treasures up His bright designs, and works his sovereign will.

Ye fearful saints fresh \_\_\_\_\_ take; the clouds you so much dread  
Are big with \_\_\_\_\_ and shall break with blessings on your head.

Judge not the Lord by feeble sense but trust Him for His grace;  
Behind a frowning providence He hides a \_\_\_\_\_ face.

His purposes will ripen fast unfolding every hour;  
The bud may have a bitter taste but sweet will be the flow'r.

Blind unbelief is sure to err and scan His work in vain;  
God is His own interpreter and \_\_\_\_\_ will make it plain

"By nature, \_\_\_\_\_ are as obnoxious to God as any Moabite ever was! If you look at our lives and how we live, you know we are undeserving of God's grace. And yet he has been so good to us. He has been kind to us. Amid our complaining, he continues to bless us. He gives us a Ruth, and a barley harvest. Our sovereign and loving Lord provides. When you are tempted, like Naomi, to doubt him during bad times, remember that God provides.

"God lets us go through trials in order to \_\_\_\_\_ the depths of our \_\_\_\_\_ and to show us the fullness of his \_\_\_\_\_. God digs deep when he plans on building high." (242)

### 2. Human kindness expresses the kindness of God.

Especially when human beings are desperate but all the time, kindness warms human hearts and honors God. This book drips with kindness. How can we be kind? By sympathizing with those who are down and hurting, by \_\_\_\_\_ about others and their plight, by \_\_\_\_\_ others when they have need, by being faithful. This is the nature of love.

1 Corinthians 13:4 --- Love is patient and \_\_\_\_\_.

Galatians 5:22-23a --- But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, \_\_\_\_\_, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control;

### 3. God's plan is to bring the most undeserving people into His family.

Ruth was a Moabitess!!

The Moabites were a \_\_\_\_\_ people as we have seen.

“God’s plans in the Old Testament center on the Israelites, to be sure, but only in order to prepare the way for the salvation of \_\_\_\_\_ the nations---for Moabites like Ruth and Canaanites like Rahab, for Jew and Gentile, for you and me. The story of Ruth clearly teaches that God wills for Gentiles to share in the covenant blessings of Abraham.” (Dever, 240)

4. God’s Means of bringing people into His family is \_\_\_\_\_

These events take place in \_\_\_\_\_!!

“It moves from being a place of famine to being a place of fruitfulness. Bethlehem was the burial place of Jacob’s beloved Rachel. Now, it is where Obed, his son Jesse, and his son David would be born. And a few centuries later, the Lord would say through the prophet Micah, “But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel whose origins are from of old, from ancient times” (Mic. 5:2).

“Then hundreds of years later still, when Herod asked where the Messiah would be born, this passage from Micah was quoted. When the fullness of time came, God used the offices of the mighty Roman Empire to order a census, so that people would return to their native towns. So Joseph and his betrothed wife Mary, who lived in the north of Israel in Galilee, had to travel south to Bethlehem. And there in Bethlehem Jesus was born.” (241)

Jesus came as a \_\_\_\_\_ to redeem human beings from our sin and disobedience. Like Boaz, Jesus has the right, the resources, and the resolve to redeem.

He has the \_\_\_\_\_. Hebrews 2:14 --- Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

He has the \_\_\_\_\_. 1 Peter 1:18-19 --- you were ransomed (redeemed) from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

He has the \_\_\_\_\_. Mark 10:45 --- “For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Every one of us stands before God as a stranger and an outcast, but the good news is that God is a redeemer who seeks us and saves us. He has a right to redeem us the resources to redeem and the resolve to redeem.