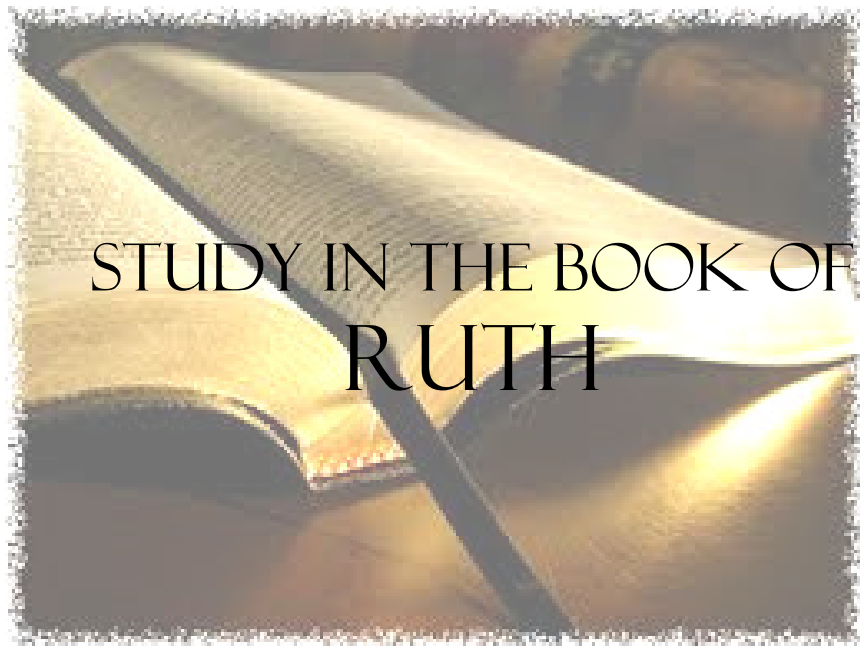




## CHRISTIAN RESOURCES



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Footprints into Africa

# STUDIES IN THE BOOK OF RUTH

## Part 1 - Chapter 1

### SORROW - RUTH WEeping - YOU CAN'T RUN AWAY

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

BST David Atkinson

Judges and Ruth - Leon Morris (Tyndale)

Be committed - Warren Wiersbe

#### **PRELUDE**

Ruth and Esther are the only women in the OT who have entire books devoted to them. The book of Ruth tells the story of a Gentile who marries a Jew and who became the ancestress of the Messiah (**Mt 1:5**).

#### **BACKGROUND**

##### 1. Title

The book is named after its main character who is Ruth, the great-grandmother of king David (**Mt 1:1-5**).

##### 2. Background

The story is set in the times of the Judges, a period of religious and moral degeneracy. It also was a time of peace between Israel and Moab and is the story of a family that had some great heartache. The husband's name was Elimelech, the wife's name was Naomi, their sons' names were Mahlon and Kilion, who married Ruth and Orpah.

##### 3. Author

The author is unknown, but Jewish tradition points to Samuel and the date is after 1000 BC.

##### 4. Key Themes

###### a) Human need

We have a picture of 2 widows, who had no financial means of support, and yet God entered into the poor social conditions, to work out His purpose.

###### b) Loyalty

Ruth's commitment to her mother-in-law, Naomi, is an outstanding expression of love. Orpah disappears, but Ruth is remembered.

###### c) Providence

It's a story of God overruling every event to achieve His purposes, governing every occurrence.

## 1. **Trying to run from our problems** (1:1-5)

If we obey God's will, everything will hold together, but if you disobey, everything will fall apart.

### 1.1 The Time

Life wasn't easy in those days, Israel is experiencing a drought and it is a time when there was civil war, cruelty, apostasy and national disgrace.

### 1.2 The Place

They lived in Bethlehem, which means the "house of bread" and there was a great famine in the land.

### 1.3 The Decision

The decision was to leave Bethlehem because of this situation and to move up to Moab, deep down it was a wrong decision.

### 1.4 The Consequences

Because Elimelech left God out of his decision, one thing led to another and both of his sons married Moabitess, Mahlon married Ruth, Kilion married Orpah, which was against the Scriptures (**Dt 7:1-11**)(**23:3-6**) (**Neh13:1-3**)(**Ezra 9:1-4**). In trying to run away from his problems, one disaster led to another.

## 2. **Trying to hide our mistakes** (1:6-18)

### 2.1 The testimony of Naomi (v6-10)

Over those years God was faithful to the people in Bethlehem, Naomi hears now that the famine is over, the Lord has provided for his people, and she decides to go back. Her decision was right, but her motive was wrong, she was still interested in food not fellowship. Initially her 2 daughters-in-law were going to stay with her, however she urged them to remain in Moab, which Orpah did.

### 2.2 The testimony of Orpah (v11-14)

Orpah having been advised by Naomi stays at home, she was the weaker of the 2, and we never read of her again.

### 2.3 The testimony of Ruth (v15-18)

Her loyalty was outstanding, she makes the most magnificent confession, found in Scripture v16+17 *"Don't urge me to leave or to turn back from you. Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there I will be buried. May the Lord deal with me, be it ever so severely, if anything but death separates you and me."*

## 3. **Blaming God for our trials** (v19-27)

The 2 widows now arrive in Bethlehem, they had been away for 10 years, Naomi says to everyone, don't call me Naomi, but call me Mara because everything is bitter for me and she blamed God, BUT SHE FORGOT WHAT SHE HAD:

3.1 She had life  
There were 3 graves in Moab (Husband and 2 sons)

3.2 She had opportunity  
Ruth and friends to start again

3.3 She had a daughter-in-law  
Ruth to stand with her

3.4 She had God  
Our extremities always become God's opportunities, and now God begins to overrule and work out His marvelous purposes.

# RUTH

## Part 2 - Chapter 2

### FORTUNES CHANGE

#### INTRODUCTION

Before God changes our circumstances, He wants to change our hearts, Christ-like character is the divine goal for every believer. Chapter 1 closed with Naomi bitter against God, whereas Ruth was willing for God to have His way in her life, and so God begins to work in Ruth's life. Chapter 2 gives us certain conditions, which should be fulfilled so that God can work in our lives.

#### 1. We must live by faith in the Lord (v1-3)

- a) In the path of service or duty.  
Ruth never remained idle and gets permission to go and glean in the fields so that they would have food to eat (Lev 19:9+10) (Dt 24:19-22).  
The existence of this law was proof that God was concerned for the poor, a Latin proverb says "providence assists not the idle."
- b) In the path of God's providence
  - i. Boaz Introduced
    - 1. His family connections
    - 2. He was a relative of Elimelech

His upright position  
His name means in him is strength
  - ii. Providential Arrangements
    - i. She got to the right field
    - ii. At the right moment
    - iii. There was the right action

Now it's becoming clear that God's providence is ruling all things well.

#### 2. We must live by the grace of God (v4-16)

- a) Ruth looking for grace
  - i. Early in the morning she sets out to glean in the fields and
  - ii. She was looking for someone to show her grace, grace is favour bestowed on someone who doesn't deserve it.
- b. Boaz grants his grace

God used Boaz in Ruth's life, he was concerned about his workers and his eye caught Ruth and he focuses on her, the marvellous providence of God is clear, the Lord lead Ruth to the field of Boaz and then he led Boaz to the field where Ruth was, everything happens by divine appointment.
- c. Boaz becomes a type of Christ
  - i. He took the initiative (v8) (1 Jn 4:19) (Rom 5:6)

- ii. He spoke to Ruth (v8) Ruth would never have dared to speak to a man, especially the owner of the field.
- iii. He promised to protect Ruth (v.9)  
He calls her "my daughter" and instructs his workers to deliberately drop some of the harvest so that she can pick it up.
- iv. He encouraged Ruth (v. 10)  
Ruth responds with humility and gratitude and accepted Boaz's grace, she forgot her fears and focused on Boaz's riches.  
*Warren Wiersbe "look at self and be distressed. Look at others and be depressed look at Jesus and you will be blessed"*
- v. He saw that she was satisfied (v14)  
Everything Ruth would need Boaz looked after and so she lived by the grace of God.

### 3. We must live in hope (v17-23)

- a) Ruth was not presumptuous. She had food when she was hungry and drink when she was thirsty.
  - i. She worked hard (v17-18) She was a diligent worker
  - ii. She was not wasteful (v18) She never wasted anything
  - iii. She was dutiful (v18) She cared for Naomi and so she moves into a time of great blessing, notice also how Naomi has changed.
- b) Naomi was transformed
  - i. Her change in words – blessed No more bitterness
  - ii. Her change in attitude – hope She realises that God is working in her need
  - iii. Her new understanding - who Boaz was
- c) The Kinsman Redeemer  
Naomi explains to Ruth this concept of the Kinsman Redeemer (Lev 25:47-55), as her near relative, Boaz could now redeem the family property which Elimelech had mortgaged when he moved up to Moab and more than that, he could marry Ruth.

### CONCLUSION

In chapter 2 we see the providence of God working to bring Ruth to Boaz's farm and Boaz to take an interest in Ruth, more than that Boaz was her Kinsmen Redeemer, a close relative would could marry Ruth. God is truly in control planning our lives to perfection.

## RUTH

### The Midnight meeting

#### Chapter 3

##### Introduction

Ever since Boaz came into Ruth's life Naomi has been a different person, she is no longer concerned for herself, she learns now of God's providence and her greatest joy was to serve others. In this chapter we will learn of Ruth's marriage to Boaz which is a wonderful picture of our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

##### 1) RUTH PREPARED TO MEET BOAZ (3:1-5)

###### a) She washed herself (v1)

Naomi was telling Ruth to act like a bride preparing for her wedding (Ezk 16:9-12), if we want to enter into a deeper relationship with the Lord we also must wash ourselves of all filthiness (2 Cor 7:1) (Ps 51:2+7)(1 Jn 1:9). In the NT language the need is of holiness (2 Cor 6:14-7:1).

###### b) She anointed herself (v2)

In that culture they would anoint themselves with oil after bathing, that would heal their bodies and make themselves pleasant for others, this speaks to us of the presence and the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the more we are like Jesus in character and conduct, the more we please our heavenly Father (1 Jn 2:20+27) (2 Cor 2:15).

###### c) She changes her clothes (v3)

She put off the garments of a sorrowful widow and put on the dress of a bride (Is 61:1-3), for us we need to put off the rags of our own self righteousness and be clothed with Christ righteousness (Is 64:6)(Rev 19:8).

###### d) Learning how to present herself to him (v4)

She simply had to put herself at the feet of Boaz, and he would do the rest. The lesson for us is simple, we are to submit to the Lordship of Christ and sit at his feet (Heb 10:19-25).

###### e) She promised to obey him (v5)

All that you say to me I will do', as Ruth was willing to obey all that Boaz told her to do, so we are willing to do whatever Jesus tells us to do.

##### 2) RUTH SUBMITTED TO BOAZ (3:6-9)

The harvest season was a joyful time for the Jews (Is 9:3)(16:10), harvesting brought about co-operation, the men of the village would take turns in using the threshing floor and there they would separate the grain, this meant they would often work into the night.

That evening Ruth sleeps at the feet of Boaz and on awaking she asks him to obey the law of a Kinsmen-redeemer and take her as his wife, which was the custom of the day.

##### 3) RUTH LISTENED TO BOAZ (3:10-14)

In Boaz's response to Ruth we can see how the Lord Jesus responds to us.

a) He accepts her (v8-10)

Boaz could have refused Ruth but he doesn't, he accepted her.

b) He assures her (v11-13)

'Don't be afraid I will do for you all that you ask', this word don't be afraid is a common one from the Lord, Abraham (Gen 15:1), Isaac (Gen 26:24), Jacob (Gen 46:3), Moses (Ex 14:13), (Jos 8:1), (Ezk 3:9), Joseph (Mt 1:20), Mary (Lk 1:30), Paul (Acts 27:24), and John (Rev 1:7).

c) Obeded His own law (v14)

Boaz promised to redeem Ruth and so Ruth prepares herself for Boaz, and she submitted and listen to Boaz.

4) RUTH RECEIVED GIFTS FROM BOAZ (3:15-17)

Ruth in addition receives generous treatment from Boaz, he calmed her fears, gave her assurance for the future, but also provided for her needs. Ruth shows Naomi the generous gifts from Boaz.

5) RUTH WAITED FOR BOAZ TO WORK (3:18)

Naomi urges Ruth to do 3 things:

a) She was to sit still and wait for Boaz

So often that is where Jesus wants us to be

b) Stand still (Ex 14:13)

There is a time to stand and a time to move

c) Be still (Ps 46:10)

Boaz was busy working for Ruth and Naomi was confident that he wouldn't work is completed (Php 1:6)(Heb 8:34).



## RUTH

### Love finds a way

#### Chapter 4

##### Introduction

The book of Ruth started with 3 funerals, but it closes with a wedding throughout the book there is a great deal of weeping, but in this last chapter there is joy and the great theme is we never must be afraid of the future, love always finds a way.

#### 1) THE BRIDEGROOM (4:1-10)

##### a) Meaning of redemption

The background to this section is found in (Lev 25:23-34) (Dt 25:5-10), the purpose of these laws was to preserve the name and the property of families in Israel. The word "redeem" means to buy back at a great price. With Ruth and Naomi, Elimelech's property was given to Mahlon, Ruth's husband when Elimelech died, that explains why Ruth was so involved in this transaction.

##### b) Marks of the redeemer (v1-10)

- i) He had to be a near Kinsmen (Lev 25:25)
- ii) This was the major obstacle for Boaz because another man in Bethlehem was a nearer relative to Ruth than he was.
- iii) He had to be able to pay the redemption price

When the nearer relative couldn't offer the price, Boaz bought the land and Ruth.

- iv) He had to be willing to redeem

The nearer relative had neither the money nor the motivation and so Boaz becomes the redeemer, this is a marvellous picture for us, of our redemption in Christ. (1 Ptr 1:18+19) (Eph 1:7)(Titus 2:14)(Heb 9:12).

##### c) The method of redemption

##### i) The place

At the city gate where the judicial business was transacted in the presence of the elders (Dt 21:18-21)(2 Sam 15:2) (Job 29:7), Boaz arrives with 10 elders as witnesses.

##### ii) The opportunity

The nearer kinsmen was willing to buy the land, but he backed out when he learnt that Ruth was part of the transaction.

##### iii) The offer

Boaz now comes and offers to buy the land and Ruth.

iv) The seal

The custom of taking off the sandal and Boaz now becomes the kinsmen-redeemer, he had the land and Ruth as well.

2) THE BRIDE (v11-12)

1. The elder's prayer

The elders prayed that Ruth would be very fruitful in bearing children (Ps 127:3-5).

2. The location

They wanted the house of Boaz to become like the house of Perez (1 Chr 2:5)(2:50-54). Perez settled in Bethlehem and Boaz was his descendant.

3. The marriage

Ruth and Boaz are now married and she moves from loneliness to love, from toil to rest, from poverty to wealth, from worry to assurance, from despair to hope, all because she trusted Boaz.

3) THE BABY (v13-22)

a) God's blessing

i) Obed was a great blessing to Boaz and Ruth, he was God's special gift.

b) Naomi's blessing

i) Obed was also a blessing to Naomi, she "adopts Obed as her son."

c) Israel's blessing

Obed would bring blessing to Bethlehem because he was the father of Jesse, and Jesse the father of David, who was to produce our Lord Jesus Christ from that line.

d) Universal blessing

CONCLUSION

Never underestimate the power of the grace of God and rejoice in the truth that there is a sovereign God providentially planning out your life.