



RUTH

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RUTH

Love Story

Ruth and her:

Resolve	Unselfishness	Appeal	Reward
1:15-17	2:11-12	3:9-11	4:11,22
1	2	3	4

Under whose wings you have come to take refuge! 2:12

Welcome to the book of Ruth!

Note the passages listed within the overview chart above. Take this opportunity to refer to and note each one in your Bible. What have you learned so far about the book of Ruth?

Ruth is a high point during Israel's low-life Judges time period. While every man was "doing what was right in his own eyes," Ruth was finding refuge under wings much stronger than her own. While Orpah flies back to the comfortable nest, Ruth strikes out with her mother-in-law to an unknown land. But for Ruth, the God of that land was by no means an "unknown God". Through great pain and difficulty Ruth finds reward for her faithfulness. Though a Gentile (a non-Jew) she is given her place in the family tree of Christ!

The Writer and Setting

The author of the Ruth is unknown. It is probable that the account was written down by someone during David's reign and before that of Solomon.

According to 1:1 the historical context of the book of Ruth is the days of the judges. Many feel that because of the famine mentioned in 1:1, the story must have taken place during the rule of Gideon, since during his service to Israel a famine is mentioned in the land (Judges 6:3-4).

Once you have looked into the book of Ruth you may want to give the book of Judges a quick read. It will shed some light on the backdrop of this unique story.

Why this book?

One of the themes woven into the entire Bible is that even though God chose the Jews to guard His Word and to provide the blood lineage of the "Messiah" or deliverer, His heart included bringing knowledge of His plan for eternal life to the rest of the world (the Gentiles). Ruth shows in a very real way what kind of heart can find its way to God. The "refuge" she found under God's wings was sweeping in her life and in the lives of her children's children for generations!

Understanding the incredible concept of "Buying Back Hearts"

Ruth might be sorry for going to a land that was not her own, to a people who might reject her for being a Gentile, and sorry for the hard manual labor she might have to perform in the fields in order to survive. But notice Ruth's commitment in 1:17, where she said nothing but death would separate her from Naomi. It is with equal devotion and love that Ruth commit's her life to Boaz as his wife, and bears him a son who was directly in the lineage of King David and of the Lord Jesus Christ. Her glimpse of the Living God had become a way of living for Ruth.

A key theme found in Ruth centers around the concept of redemption (2:20; 4:1, 4:6-14). The word "redemption" may be defined as "to purchase by paying a price." In modern times, this word has come to mean a cold business transaction that lacks a warm, personal element, like when you go to your local "Redemption" center and exchange your items for cash.

Biblical redemption, however, is the love story of a noble relative who did not count the costs of the potential profit and loss but joyously paid an unreasonable price for one that he loved. The book of Ruth declares that redemption is not a business transaction but a love affair. For the Christ-follower, our "family-redeemer" is Jesus Christ. Paul says that "in Him we have redemption, through His blood..." (Ephesians 1:7). Never in history has such an unbelievable price been paid for such an unworthy item.

Open your heart as you read!

This book can open doors of understanding to the careful, thoughtful reader. When you feel like your life is insignificant and small, remember Ruth. When you feel like your life is futile and your choices, think of Ruth. And when you are facing life decisions that are weighty and even scary, think of Ruth. She is truly an example of a woman of faith with a true heart of courage!

In Focus

In Joshua, we viewed a newly circumcised child, in Judges a sinning child. Though a whole nation appeared dark and faithless, Ruth, the Gentile Moabitess, shines bright in her faith! From Ruth we can learn principles about shining brightly despite very dark circumstances.



Ruth Chapter Chart

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Chapter	Title	Key Verse
1		
2		
3		
4		

Ruth's Resolve

Read Chapter 1:1-18

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Why did Elimelech move to Moab?
2. Elimelech's name means "my God is King." Did his actions coincide with his name?
3. Do some background study on Moab. Would God have been pleased with Elimelech's choice for a family living location?
4. How does Orpah's reaction compare to that of Ruth's?
5. What does this reveal about their differing views of the God of Israel?
6. What does Naomi's bitterness reveal about her relationship with God (1:20)?
7. As we observe Ruth's resolve (1:16,17), what do we learn of her faith and character? Her view of God?

What about today?

Ruth's resolve encompassed forsaking her family, lifestyle, and gods. Does your resolve reflect this kind of commitment? Is your lifestyle changing and growing? What "gods" continue to pull at you!?

Disgraceful Return

Read Chapter 1:19-22

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Naomi means "pleasant." Mara means "bitter." Did Naomi have a right to be bitter?
2. Toward whom was her bitterness directed?
3. What is her attitude toward God (notice how she addresses Him)?
4. What does Naomi's situation and attitude reveal about the nation of Israel?

What about today?

Accepting God's will does not ensure human happiness. Yet in the midst of adversity, our Lord God must be seen as the Almighty One...the Sovereign God of His children. Was Naomi embittered toward God or life's circumstances? Be careful not to confuse the two in your own life as you encounter "various trials!"

Ruth's Request

Read Chapter 2:1-17

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Was Ruth's gleaning in Boaz's field premeditated?
2. What was the financial status of Boaz?
3. What kind of a man was Boaz?
4. In Boaz's initial response to Ruth, do you see an age difference (compare 3:10)?
5. What was the thing that most impressed Boaz?
6. What does verse 11 teach you about the Jewish people?

What about today?

When we look for refuge in God He provides His protection as well as for our basic needs. Ruth prospered because she sought refuge under the only wings that could protect her. This is the basis of her commitment to Naomi. It is easy in our culture to be obsessed with accumulation and only then to choose protection in God when our "pressing" needs are satisfied!

A Favorable Report

Read Chapter 2:18-23

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What did Naomi deduce about the situation?
2. What was Naomi's recommendation?
3. What do you think she was hoping for Ruth? For herself?

What about today?

Note the emphasis on resting in God's protection. How different is this attitude than the one of independence and autonomy that permeates our world? Do you share this same commitment to labor in God's field (life) and to trust God for the outcome?

Ruth's Appeal

Read Chapter 3:1-18

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. Why was Naomi so interested in security for Ruth?
2. What did she mean by security?
3. How did Ruth view marriage?
4. What are the implications for our views on marriage?
5. What was Boaz's opinion of Ruth's action?
6. How did Boaz continue to protect Ruth?
7. What does verse 18 reveal about Boaz's character?

What about today?

What is your view of marriage? Marriage is to provide protection for both partners - which will please God. How does that differ from our culture's view of romance and marriage?

Ruth's Reward

Read Chapter 4:1-12

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. What does this section teach us about the nature of God's chosen people?
2. What premium was placed upon family and inheritance?
3. What does the response of the people and elders who were in the court reveal about their national view of marriage? Their feelings about women?
4. What should be the motivation of God-centered Christian marriage?

What about today?

It is important to contrast the custom of God's chosen people with that of the present culture and age. The deep family inheritance emphasis has not been transferred to the current church, and we often place diminished value upon God's providence and redemption. This root of apathy and rebellion erodes our society's moral fiber, and results in a society that is ungrateful for many of the truly important things in life.

Ruth's Reward: Amazing Future

Read Chapter 4:13-17

KEY QUESTIONS:

1. How was Ruth's faithfulness specifically rewarded? Obed means "servant."
2. Compare this genealogy with those recorded in Matthew and Luke. What do you observe? What does this comparison teach you?

What about today?

Ruth's present reward was redemption through marriage. This is a picture of the future reward (revealed in the genealogy) of God's people and the Christ...the One who is able to buy back those who will inherit His Kingdom!

My thoughts about God's faithful providence of a place of refuge for me:

A GREAT PRICE!

"And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, 'May he be blessed of the Lord...the man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.'" Ruth 2:20

"And she answered, 'I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative.'" Ruth 3:9

A Family-Redeemer is...

A "Blood" Relative...

Boaz: Ruth 2:1, 2

Jesus Christ: Hebrews 2:14-18

Who "Buys back" another at His Own Cost...

The Unwilling "Closest Relative": Ruth 4:6

Boaz: Ruth 4:9-10

Jesus Christ: Ephesians 1:7

Redemption comes with a price; the closest relative was unwilling to pay it "or I may jeopardize my own estate." Christ left the glory of heaven and "emptied Himself...and humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death" (Philippians 2:7-8) - in the place of those truly deserving death! (Consider Isaiah 53:3-8, especially verse 8).

Boaz was willing to pay the price and he was blessed by the people (Ruth 4:11) and by God (Ruth 4:4-13, 18-22) for doing so.

Because Jesus Christ willingly paid the price, "God lifted Him high, and placed upon him the name which is above every name..."

Consider a sharp contrast between the two - Boaz redeemed Ruth (described in Ruth 3:11b); Jesus Christ redeemed us (described in Psalm 14:2-3; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 1-3; Ephesians 2:1-3)...do you see the comparative analogy?!

What about me?

The following six definitions are the ones listed in the World Book Dictionary for the word "redeem." Each fact sheds tremendous light on God's choice to buy us back from spiritual death. How does this make you feel about what Christ did for you?

Redeem

1. To buy back
2. To pay off
3. To carry out; make good; fulfill
4. To set free; rescue; save
5. To make up for; balance
6. To reclaim

Passages: Exodus 6:6 -- Definitions 4 and 6

Psalm 26:11 -- Definition 5

Isaiah 59:16-21 -- Definition 3

Revelation 5:9-10 -- Definitions 1 and 2