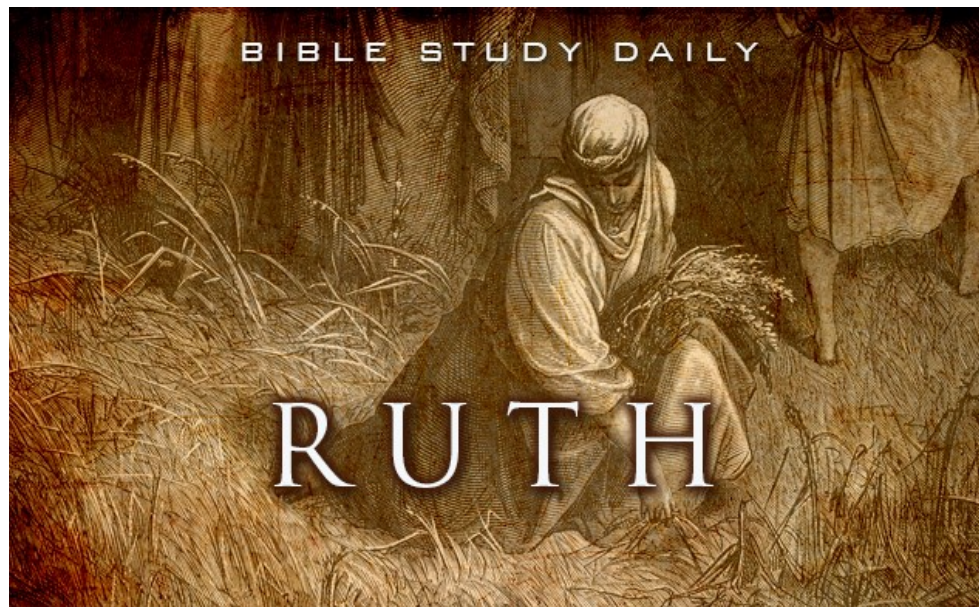




BIBLE STUDY DAILY



This document contains the introduction to the book of Ruth as well as my study notes for the book.

Name

The book of “Ruth” gets its name from Ruth, one of the central characters of the book. She was a Moabite woman who is seen in the lineage of David and Jesus. Ruth is one of only two books in the Bible named for women (the other is Esther).

Author

There is no author identified in the book of Ruth itself. However, the Talmud identifies the author as Samuel. Given the time frame of the book it is quite possible that Samuel was the author.

Genre

Narrative History

Literary Form

Historical Narrative

Time Frame

Based on the genealogies recorded at the end of the book, most scholars agree that the book of Ruth was likely written during the reign of King David (1011-971 B.C.). However, the events of the story of Ruth and Naomi probably took place around 1140 B.C.

Emphasis

The book of Ruth emphasizes the faithfulness of Ruth to her mother-in-law Naomi, and to Naomi’s God. God’s grace, God’s providence, faithful love, and the role of the kinsman redeemer are all in view.

The main themes include:

- Loyalty
- Faith
- Grace

Outline

The book of Ruth is often described as having four scenes:

Scene 1: Life in Moab.

Scene 2: The fields of Bethlehem.

Scene 3: Boaz, the kinsman redeemer.

Scene 4: Life and love in the city of Bethlehem.

What I Noticed Today (Ruth 1-4)

There is so much richness in the book of Ruth. I wish we had more than one day to spend studying it!

Note: Ruth begins with a funeral and ends with a wedding. It is a story told in four acts: tears, toil, trust, and triumph. Naomi goes from bitterness to blessed. Ruth goes from loneliness to love.

Ruth 1

In verses 1-5 during the time of the judges when there was famine in the land, Elimelech and his wife Naomi left Bethlehem to go live in Moab.

Note: Naomi and her husband left Judah to go live in enemy country among the Moabites because of the famine in Judah. They did not trust God to provide for them!

- Naomi's sons married Moabite women. One was named Orpah and the other was named Ruth.

Note: Intermarriage was contrary to God's law (Deuteronomy 7:3). Plus, the Moabite women had a reputation for leading the Israelites astray (Numbers 25).

- Naomi's husband died. After they were in Moab for 10 years her sons also died leaving her alone in a foreign land with two daughters-in-law, Ruth and Orpah.

In verses 6-22 Naomi made the decision to move back to Judah because the famine had ended, the Lord had given them food.

- Naomi asked the Lord to bless Ruth and Orpah with His faithful love.

Note: This term "faithful love" (Hebrew – *chesed*) is a term of covenantal relationship that combines love and faithfulness, grace and mercy. It was an odd request for a Jewess to ask God to bless Moabite women.

- Naomi told her daughters-in-law to return to their country and their god. Orpah eventually left Naomi to return home but Ruth refused to leave her.
- Ruth remained loyal to Naomi, even swearing an oath to God (using the term *Yahweh*) that she would live with and be buried with Naomi.
- The women traveled back to Bethlehem in Judah arriving at the time of the barley harvest.
- The townspeople remembered her and were excited to see her.
- Naomi told the people to rename her and call her Mara.

Note: Naomi means *pleasant* while Mara means *bitter*.

Ruth 2

In Ruth 2, Ruth meets Boaz and he provides for Naomi and Ruth.

In verses 1-3 Boaz was a close relative of Elimelech, Naomi's deceased husband. He was a prominent man of noble character.

Note: The Hebrew for "prominent man" (or "man of standing") is the same as used when describing Gideon and Jephthah. It means literally, "a mighty man of valor."

- Ruth asked permission from Naomi to go and gather fallen grain in the fields of Boaz.
- With no money, Ruth went out into the fields to glean some grain to eat.

In verses 4-17 Boaz met and showed kindness to Ruth:

- Boaz, the owner of the field noticed her, learned of her situation, and took care to protect her.
- Boaz instructed his men not to bother Ruth and to even leave extra stalks of grain behind for her to pick up.
- As a result, Ruth was able to gather 26 quarts of grain

Note: 26 quarts was about an ephah and would be enough to feed someone for several weeks.

- Naomi counseled her daughter-in-law regarding the law of the kinsman redeemer, and Ruth followed her instructions to continue to gather in Boaz's field and stay near his female servants.

Ruth 3

Over the weeks of the barley and wheat harvest, Naomi continues to counsel Ruth whose relationship with Boaz begins to blossom.

- Naomi instructed Ruth to wash, put on perfume and her best clothes and go down to Boaz's threshing floor after Boaz had finished eating.
- Ruth did exactly as name instructed.
- Ruth laid down at Boaz's feet and when he awoke she explained she was his slave and he was her kinsman redeemer.
- Boaz blessed Ruth for her kindness to him and referred to her as "my daughter" (an indication of the difference in their ages).
- Boaz explained that yes he was a kinsman redeemer, but there was one person who was a closer relation. If that man did not redeem Ruth, he would.
- In the morning, Boaz gave Ruth six measures of barley and she returned

to Naomi.

Note: Six measures of barley is about two ephahs which would weigh about 60 pounds.

Ruth 4

Boaz exercises the right of kinsman redeemer to marry Ruth.

- Boaz went to the city gates, gathered 10 elders, and spoke to them explaining Naomi and Ruth's situation. He explained there was another relative who had the first right of redemption.
- When the other relative refused to redeem her, Boaz made the commitment to redeem Ruth.
- Boaz and Ruth were married, and immediately had a son named Obed who became the father of Jesse, who became the father of David.

Note: Obed is short for Obadiah which means "servant of the Lord."

In verses 18-22 the book of Ruth closes with the lineage from Perez, through Boaz, to David.

Some thoughts for further consideration:

- *Ruth had believed in God even when she was in Moab. She placed herself at the feet of her redeemer and trusted in him. Jesus Christ is our kinsman redeemer. What a beautiful picture of God's grace and mercy to us!*