

RUTH

Quiet Heroine of the Faith

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- No author is named for this book, so it remains anonymous.
 - Though it is placed after Judges in the English Bible, the Jewish ordering counts it among the third division of the canon, the Writings.
 - Other factors such as the language and customs (e.g., levirate marriage) support a pre-exilic date.
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Writing of the Book

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- I. **Flight and Tragedy of Elimelech's Family (1:1-5)**
 - II. **Naomi and Ruth Return to Bethlehem (1:6-22)**
 - III. **Ruth Meets Boaz (2)**
 - IV. **Naomi's Plan and Its Success (3)**
 - V. **The Marriage of Ruth and Boaz, and the Birth of a Son (4:1-17)**
 - VI. **The Genealogy of Perez (4:18-22)**
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Outline of Ruth

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- This short book, only 85 verses, is a **reminder of God's faithfulness, his compassionate loyalty to us as his people in Christ.**
 - It helps us see **how God is involved in our ordinary lives, how he works through the everyday faithfulness of us, his people, and how he keeps his promises to us in Christ even when it's hard to see.**
 - God is always working, not just in the big or spiritual things, but in all things; **even if his movements and work seem indistinguishable from chance, we can see them if we look with the eyes of faith.**
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Purpose and Message

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- The book of Ruth reminds us today that **in Jesus Christ**, through his cross and resurrection, **God has committed himself to us**, and **God stays faithful to us in Christ**.
 - One of the ways he expresses his faithfulness and compassionate loyalty to us is **through his everyday grace**. **God sovereignly and providentially works his grace throughout our lives**, not giving us what we really deserve and **so often giving us what we don't deserve**.
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Purpose and Message

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- Ruth reminds us that we can serve and walk with God by faith, because **he never lets us down**, because **he is working out his good plan** in the universe and in us, because **God is faithful to his promises and he does right by his people**.
 - Ultimately, he does this through **the gift of Jesus Christ his Son**, David's ancestor, **our kinsman-redeemer**.
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Purpose and Message

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- In the Old Testament context, this is significant for the reader's understanding of David.
 - **The story of Ruth**, drawn from David's ancestry, offers an explanation of the survival of faith.
 - **The message is that God preserved families of faith**, and that from one such family King David came. This is similar to how God preserved the faith of the patriarchs. The book of Ruth provides another example of God's covenant loyalty and the faith it engenders.
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Purpose and Message

The Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 2:1; 20 3:2

Now Naomi had a kinsman of her husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech, whose name was Boaz.

Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, “May he be blessed of the LORD who has not withdrawn his kindness to the living and to the dead.” Again Naomi said to her, “The man is our relative, he is one of our closest relatives.”

Now is not Boaz our kinsman, with whose maids you were? Behold, he winnows barley at the threshing floor tonight.

Major Themes

Ruth 4:1-6

Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there, and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz spoke was passing by, so he said, “Turn aside, friend, sit down here.” And he turned aside and sat down. He took ten men of the elders of the city and said, “Sit down here.” So they sat down. Then he said to the closest relative, “Naomi, who has come back from the land of Moab, has to sell the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. So I thought to inform you, saying, ‘Buy it before those who are sitting here, and before the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if not, tell me that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am after you.’” And he said, “I will redeem it.” Then Boaz said, “On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also acquire Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of the deceased, in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance.” The closest relative said, “I cannot redeem it for myself, because I would jeopardize my own inheritance. Redeem it for yourself; you may have my right of redemption, for I cannot redeem it.”

Major Themes

The Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 4:10

Moreover, I have acquired Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, to be my wife in order to raise up the name of the deceased on his inheritance, so that the name of the deceased will not be cut off from his brothers or from the court of his *birth* place; you are witnesses today.”

**Major
Themes**

The Kinsman Redeemer

- The levirate system is expounded in the legal literature of Israel in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Under this law, if a man died without having a son, his brother was obligated to bear a son by his widow.
 - An expanded interpretation of this custom of levirate marriage is combined with land redemption rights to provide the legal setting for the book of Ruth.
 - The Hebrew term *goel* (kinsman-redeemer) is taken from the land redemption law (Lev 25:25-31, 47-55).
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Major Themes

The Kinsman Redeemer

- Both the land law and levirate marriage were intended to preserve families and land – **covenant matters of the first degree.**
 - The *goel* provided the means by which jeopardized covenant blessings could be regained and **thus served as an appropriate metaphor for God's grace.** Yahweh constantly acted as *goel* for Israel, and the New Testament was quick to apply that concept to the role of Christ.
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Major Themes

Hesed

- Related most frequently to covenant loyalty, the Hebrew term *hesed* envelops all the far-reaching implications of Yahweh's loyalty to his covenant.
 - The KJV frequently translates the term "mercy," while the NASB choose the compound term *lovingkindness*.
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Major Themes

Hesed

- These **only begin to introduce all the varied ways whereby God demonstrates his covenant loyalty**, and this variety is reflected in the decision by the translators of the NIV to use an array of terms: *kindness, love, loyalty*, and more.
 - The Lord's *hesed* is introduced in 1:8-9 as the factor that will eventually lead to the successful remarriage of Naomi's daughters-in-law, so that it cannot help but be recognized in the provision of the *goel* for Ruth (cf. 4:14).
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Major Themes

Pentecost

- In later Judaism, the book of Ruth becomes associated with the Feast of Pentecost, where it was read every year.
 - Pentecost is the second major feast of the year and marked the end of the grain harvest when the people came with their tithes and gifts to the sanctuary, expressing their gratitude to and dependence on God (Lev 23:9-14).
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Major Themes

Pentecost

- At Pentecost, the reading from the Law was Exodus 19-20, God revealing himself to his people on Mt. Sinai, where he gave them structure and direction for the redeemed life.
 - Of course, for us as Christians, Pentecost is the day that God poured out the Holy Spirit among us, forming us as his people, the church, bringing in a great harvest, showing his kindness, provision, and power.
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Major Themes