



Pastor's Bible Study

Becoming Disciples Through Bible Study

Week Twenty-Two – Ruth

Review

Literary Period Covered: 1160 - 1100 B.C.E.

What will become of the Israelites?

Judges 3:5 - *The Israelites lived among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites and Jebusites. 6 They took their daughters in marriage and gave their own daughters to their sons, and served their gods.*

Is there any hope for the plan of Salvation?

Lecture Segment

Ruth

The book of Ruth recapitulates back into the Book of Judges at the time of Samson. The book begins with a Prologue of 71 words long in Hebrew (Chapter 1:1-5) sharing a message of Tragedy and Death. It ends with an Epilogue of 73 words long in Hebrew (Chapter 4:13-17) concluding with the message of Joy and Birth. In our second class we were introduced this literary tool Inclusio to highlight the message of scripture.

Inclusio (sometimes double inclusio): Repetition of same language at beginning and end of a section of literature forming bookends. An inclusio tells the reader that what is in the middle of the two bookends is support or an explanation of what the words making up the bookends.

Ruth is a story of faithfulness, both human and divine. Naomi demonstrated faithfulness by returning to the land of promise. Ruth demonstrated her faithfulness by accompanying Naomi to Bethlehem and working the fields to provide for her. Ruth further demonstrated faithfulness to her deceased husband by her desire to marry into his family. Boaz demonstrated his faithfulness by fulfilling his covenant role as near kinsman.

Above all, Ruth is a story of God's faithfulness. God was faithful in preserving a family line, which—in God's time—led to King David and ultimately to Jesus. Ruth's story serves as a reminder that our faithfulness plays a part in the fulfillment of God's promises.

- I. Choice of Faith (1:1–22)
- II. Challenge in Faith (2:1–23)
- III. Claim by Faith (3:1–18)
- IV. Child because of Faith (4:1–22)¹

¹ Mathews, K. A. (1998). [The Historical Books](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 104). Broadman & Holman Publishers.



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CHALLENGE IN FAITH - 2:1-23

“CHANCE MEETING - 2:1-3. Boaz was a relative of Elimelech. He was a man of importance and wealth who was able to act as Ruth's kinsman-redeemer.

According to Mosaic law, the poor could glean the corners of the fields. Ruth looked for work, and “as it turned out” she came to the field of Boaz. The Hebrew text says literally “her chance chanced” to work in the fields of Boaz. This expression intentionally exaggerates the way the human eye saw her actions. The author did this to draw attention to the hidden reality of God's providential intervention. This was not accidental but the work of God veiled from Ruth's eyes.

RUTH'S COMMENDATION – 2:4-18. Boaz invited Ruth to work exclusively in his fields. Ruth was surprised by Boaz's generosity, particularly since she was a Moabitess, a foreigner. Boaz explained that he had already heard a good report about her commitment to Naomi. He commended Ruth for her faithfulness and prayed that God might bless her.

Boaz acted on his prayer. He rewarded Ruth with roasted grain and instructed his laborers to leave stalks behind for her to glean. At the end of her work, Ruth had enough food for Naomi. As God had used Boaz and Ruth to feed Naomi, God would use them to give Naomi a son.

RUTH'S CARE – 2:19-23 Naomi exulted in the Lord when she learned about Boaz because she knew that he was a [Guardian]-redeemer. She urged Ruth to follow Boaz's instructions because he would care for her safety.

BOAZ IS A GUARDIAN REDEEMER – 2:20

A guardian-redeemer was a close, influential relative to whom members of the extended family could turn for help, usually when the family line or possessions were in danger of being lost. He was responsible for buying back family land sold during a crisis (see [Lev 25:25](#)), buying back enslaved relatives (see [Lev 25:47-49](#)), providing an heir for a dead brother (see [Dt 25:5-10](#)), avenging the killing of a relative (see [Nu 35:19-21](#)) and caring for relatives in difficult circumstances (see [Jer 32:6-25](#)).

The idea of the guardian-redeemer is also used at times to refer to God and his redemption of Israel (see [Ex 6:6-8](#); [Job 19:25](#); [Ps 19:14](#); [69:18](#); [Isa 43:1](#)). In these passages, God is Israel's nearest redeemer, stepping in to bring the nation back into his family when the people could not do it themselves.

The word guardian-redeemer finds ultimate fulfillment in the coming of the Messiah (see [Isa 59:20](#)). Jesus is our near guardian who came to buy us back into God's family. In the New Testament the concept is reflected in the various words for redeem, which suggest paying a ransom, making a purchase or saving from loss.

CLAIM BY FAITH - 3:1-18



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RUTH'S OBEDIENCE - 3:1–6. Naomi instructed Ruth to prepare herself properly and approach Boaz during the night at the threshing floor. She obeyed Naomi's instructions carefully. Ironically, Naomi is the one who would find "a home" ("rest," 3:1) for Ruth and not a Moabite husband.

A threshing floor was a stone surface in the fields where the harvest husks were crushed and the grain sifted from the chaff.

RUTH'S TRUST - 3:7–15. Ruth secretly approached Boaz. By lying at his feet, Ruth humbled herself as one of his servants. She trusted God to use Boaz to answer her needs and to protect her. Ruth startled Boaz since women were usually not with the men at night.

She made her request: "Spread the corner of your garment over me, since you are a [guardian]-redeemer." By this expression Ruth was asking Boaz for marriage (see Ezek. 16:8). The Hebrew word translated "corner" can also be translated "wings." Boaz had prayed that Ruth might have refuge under the "wings" of God. He was used by God to provide the refuge for which Boaz himself had prayed.

Boaz commended Ruth for her righteous conduct because she chose him instead of a younger man. This was a greater act of loyalty ("kindness," 3:10) than even her initial faithfulness ("kindness") to the family.

Boaz told Ruth that there was another kinsman [guardian] who had the first right to redeem her. If he declined, then Boaz promised to marry her. He gave Ruth a bounty of grain as an indication of his commitment.

RUTH'S PATIENCE - 3:16–18. Ruth reported to Naomi about Boaz's promise, and she gave her the grain from Boaz. This was another sign that God was answering their prayers through the hand of Boaz. Naomi told Ruth that she must be patient until the man carried out his pledge that day.²

Conclusion

The Book of Ruth shows God working behind the scenes in the lives of ordinary people, turning apparent tragedy into joy and peace. The Book of Ruth shows God as concerned not only for the welfare of one family—Naomi and Ruth—but for the welfare of all God's people who would be blessed by David and by David's Son, Jesus Christ. The participation of Ruth, the Moabitess, in the fulfillment of God's promises indicates that God's salvation is for people of all nationalities.

² Mathews, K. A. (1998). [The Historical Books](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (pp. 106–108). Broadman & Holman Publishers.



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By their faithfulness, integrity, and love, the characters of the Book of Ruth mirrored the character of God. They serve as reminders that the lives of godly people are a powerful witness to God's self-sacrificing love.³

It is the greatest love story in the Bible between:

1. Ruth and Naomi
2. Ruth and Boaz
3. God and humanity

In the end Christ is our Guardian Redeemer:

1. He is our next nearest relative

He is fully human, fully divine

2. He has the resources

Christ is sin free

3. He is willing to do so

He willing went to the Cross for each one of us

Conclusion

The Plan of Salvation is back in the fold.

Questions for Reflection

1. What does the book teach about the loving care of God?
2. How should the people of God respond to the sorrows of life?
3. How should those who are different in race, color, or economic status be treated?
4. How does the book encourage the people of God to be faithful?
5. Why should the people of God pray?⁴

Scripture and Study for next week

Read 1 Samuel 1-8 - The last Judge

⁴ Mathews, K. A. (1998). [The Historical Books](#). In D. S. Dockery (Ed.), *Holman concise Bible commentary* (p. 108). Broadman & Holman Publishers.