

RUTH: *Our Kinsman Redeemer*

The romance of redemption

R*uth* gets its title from the heroine of the book. She is a foreigner, from the land of Moab, who becomes the great grandmother of King David. It is not fiction, but is the real story of the lineage of the king and the future Messiah. She is the widow of Mahlon, the son of Naomi and Elimelech who were living in Moab because of famine. Ruth was a Moabitess, a descendent of Lot (Gen. 19:37), who lived in the area east of the Dead Sea. The god of the Moabites was Chemosh, to which children were sacrificed.

Never measure a book by its size. This little booklet of a few pages “is one of the rarest and most beautiful idylls in literature.” It is a delightful picture of the domestic life in time of anarchy and poverty from famine. It is as Clyde T. Francisco says, “one of the master short stories of all time.” This is the story of how God has a witness during the darkest days of Jewish history. God is all-sufficient for those who trust in Him.

AUTHOR: of Ruth is unknown.

DATE: The setting for the events in the book of Ruth is stated in 1:1. “Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land.” Therefore it is placed in the dark ages of Hebrew history, a time of deterioration, apostasy and disorganization. The land was in social chaos. The time covered is about twelve years. Ruth serves as a bridge in the history of Israel between the Judges and the monarchy.

It was probably written during the reign of David, but before Solomon began his reign since it gives only a partial genealogy of David.

PURPOSE: One of the purposes of the book is found in the genealogy in 4:17-22 demonstrating the lineage of the Messiah through Obed, Jesse and David. The majestic sovereignty of God is seen in the unfolding of the plan of redemption through the lineage of David and the Messiah. God did not allow the lineage to be broken even during the dark ages of Hebrew history. A thousand years have passed since God called Abraham to be the father of a nation and another thousand will pass before the coming of the greater Son of David, the Messiah, Jesus Christ (Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:31-38). Ruth is important to us because of its teaching on the lineage of the messiah. This foreigner was included in God’s grace. This is a picture of the wonder of God’s love in the midst of human depravity at its worst. God’s eternal purposes were not thwarted by the sinfulness of mankind. He had His person to continue the lineage of the Messiah. The world’s most unimportant people are God’s most important. This Moabitess was excluded by the law, but received by God’s grace.

The main purpose of this book is to make practical application of the law of the kinsman. Ruth demonstrates the providence of a loving God in the lives of ordinary, unimportant people during turbulent times.

THEME: The most important theme is redemption with its main teaching centering on the Kinsman redeemer as a type of the Messiah. The *Goel* is the one who redeems. He must be a blood relative, have the ability to purchase, be willing to buy the inheritance and be willing to marry the widow of the deceased kinsman. God has provided a kinsman redeemer (*Goel*) for His people (Lev. 25:23-25, 47-49). “Blessed is the LORD who has not left you without a redeemer today, and may His name become famous in Israel” (Ruth 4:14). Boaz is Naomi’s kinsman redeemer who marries Ruth and keeps the family line alive and illustrates God’s redeeming work to come through Jesus Christ (Titus 2:14; 1 Pet. 1:18-19). In the book of Ruth the kinsman who is able and willing is Boaz.

KEY VERSE: 4:14

STYLE: of Ruth is more similar to 1 and 2 Samuel. It is a literary masterpiece with a symmetrical narrative, a romance that has as its theme the kinsman redeemer. It is full of imagination with its entwined theme of love and romance.

LAW OF THE KINSMAN: Elimelech and Naomi were of the tribe of Judah and the city of Bethlehem where they had rights of ancestral property. They had lost their property through foreclosure and debts and moved to the land of Moab. After her husband and sons died she and Ruth, her daughter-in-law, moved back to Bethlehem hoping to receive back the property. The marriage customs required the nearest relative of a deceased man to marry his widow (Deu. 25:5-10). The offspring of this marriage would carry the name and inheritance of the former husband. Because of age, Ruth became Naomi's substitute in marriage and bore a son to perpetuate the family lineage. Boaz became the *goel* (kinsman redeemer) and bought back the property of Elimelech for the family. It fell his duty to redeem the land (Lev. 25:25-28). This person must be near of kin, able to redeem, willing to redeem, and free of need of redemption himself. He accomplishes redemption completely when the price is paid in full. *Goel* or kinsman redeemer pays the price of redemption. The word *goel* means, "to redeem, buy back" and is applied to a piece of property, farm, salve, etc.

OUR KINSMAN REDEEMER: meets all of the law of the kinsman. He is our nearest of kin through the incarnation (Jn. 1:14; Heb. 2:10-18; Phil. 2:7; Rom. 8:3; Gal. 4:4-5). He is able and He has the power to redeem (Heb. 1:2-3; Col. 1:15-23; 2:9). Jesus is willing to redeem us (Titus 2:14; Jn. 10:11, 15, 17-18; Matt. 20:28; Heb. 10:7). He is free to redeem us because He did not need to be redeemed Himself (1 Pet. 2:21-24; 2 Cor. 5:21; 1 Pet. 3:18; 1:18-19).

Leonidas Robinson stresses that the following kind of interpretation is not always safe, "but who will say the original meanings of these names have no significance in this beautiful story?" He is referring to a suggestion of George Adam Smith of the type of Christ in Ruth. Ruth "poor and friendless lay at the feet of Boaz, meaning 'Redeemer' or 'in Him strength.' Orphal (Scull) turns back to death; Ruth (satisfied) cleaves to Naomi (God is sweet) who brings her to Bethlehem (House of Bread) and to Boaz who, like Christ, was the Bread of Life, the Lord of the harvest, and the Giver of Rest" (*Gates and Keys to the Bible Books*, p. 67).

The book of Ruth demonstrates God's providential care of His people. Naomi and Ruth were common people in common settings being guided by the supernatural hand of God to prepare for the coming of David and the Messiah. Everything that happens to God's people is significant. God's faithfulness is prominent in this book. He enters the poorest of social conditions and works out His eternal purposes through them. God is concerned with the little person, the insignificant, the average person. God cares about you and has sent His Redeemer to redeem you.

	RUTH'S RESOLVE (1:1-22)
	Naomi's Family (1:1-5)
	Ruth's Choice (1:6-18)
	Move to Bethlehem (1:19-22)
	RUTH'S REDEEMER (2:1-23)
	"Field of Boaz" (2:1-3)
	Ruth Meets Boaz (2:2-7)
	Boaz Provides for Ruth (2:8-23)
	RUTH'S REQUEST (3:1-18)
	Naomi's Wisdom (3:1-4)
	Ruth's Obedience (3:5-9)
	Boaz's Response (3:10-18)
	RUTH'S REDEMPTION (4:1-22)
	Boaz Negotiates (4:1-12)
	A Son is Born (4:13-17)

| A Greater Son (4:18-22)

[A Look at the Book](#)

Title: Introduction to Ruth

Series: A Look at the Book

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Wil is a graduate of William Carey University, B. A.; New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, Th. M.; and Azusa Pacific University, M. A. He has pastored in Panama, Ecuador and the U. S, and served for over 20 years as missionary in Ecuador and Honduras. He had a daily expository Bible teaching ministry head in over 100 countries for ten years. He continues to seek opportunities to be personally involved in world missions. Wil and his wife Ann have three grown daughters. He currently serves as a Baptist pastor and teaches seminary extension courses in Honduras.

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