

Ruth

I. The Main Idea of Ruth

The book of Ruth serves as a counterbalance to the book of Judges.

While Judges shows the harsh consequences of covenant faithlessness, Ruth shows the rich blessings of covenant faithfulness.

The book of Ruth also introduces us to David by recounting a story of the godliness of his great-grandparents.



II. Outline of Ruth

Ruth 1	Naomi Widowed and Bereaved
Ruth 2	Ruth and Boaz in the Field
Ruth 3	Ruth and Boaz at the Threshing Floor
Ruth 4	Boaz Redeems Ruth; Genealogy of David

III. Interpretive Keys to Ruth

- Genre: Historical Narrative/Historical Storytelling
 - The author intends to communicate historical events. It doesn't tell us everything we may want to know about history, but what it does tell us is a truthful account of the past.
 - Furthermore, the book of Ruth is written in a highly polished style following the typical storytelling pattern:

Intro: _____

IV. Storyline

- Naomi, her husband, and her two sons left Bethlehem in Judah to live temporarily in Moab because of a famine. Her two sons married Moabite women (Ruth & Orpah), but then all the men in the family died. In the Iron Age culture of the ancient Near East, this meant the financial and physical security of these women had been lost.
- When she heard that the famine was over, Naomi decided to return home and Ruth came with her. Although Naomi said, “I went away full, and the Lord has brought me back empty,” that was not true. God was going to surprise her with a tremendous blessing through Ruth.
- According to the Mosaic Law, farmers were to allow the poor to glean some of their crops at harvest time (Lev. 19:9-10; 23:22). So Ruth went out to gather grain for her and Naomi, and “happened” to end up in the field of Boaz. He was kind to her, and gave grain to her generously because of her virtue:
 - “All that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband has been fully told to me ... The Lord repay you for what you have done, and a full reward be given you by the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.” (Ruth 2:11-12)
- At the end of the harvest, Naomi sent Ruth to the threshing floor at night to talk with Boaz in private and ask him to fulfill the duty of a kinsman redeemer by marrying her. Boaz said he wanted to do so, but that there was a family member who was a closer relative so he couldn’t yet. But he sent Ruth home with a large amount of grain from the threshing floor and told her he would take action.
- After giving the other kinsman a chance, Boaz married Ruth and shouldered the responsibility of caring for her and Naomi. God blessed their family by giving them a son, Obed, who was placed in the lap of Naomi. Instead of being “empty,” Naomi is now fully blessed by the Lord.
- Epilogue: Obed grew up and had a son named Jesse. He grew up and had a son named David. Thus, Boaz and Ruth are included in the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah (Matt. 1:5).



V. Messianic Elements within Ruth

Type of Christ: Boaz, a “Kinsman Redeemer”

- Ruth 2:20 “And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, ‘May he be blessed by the Lord, whose kindness has not forsaken the living or the dead!’ Naomi also said to her, ‘The man is a close relative of ours, **one of our redeemers.**’”
- In the Law of Moses, a close relative functioned as a “redeemer” by
 1. buying back family land that had been sold,
 2. buying back a relative who had sold himself into slavery, or
 3. marrying the widow of a relative who had died to bear a son on the relative’s behalf. (See Lev. 25:25-31, 47-55; Deut. 25:5-10.)
- In other words, a kinsman redeemer is someone who helps a family member out of a difficult situation by taking the responsibility of that person onto themselves.
 - Note that in all of the examples above, it was costly to fulfill the duties of a redeemer.
- Elsewhere in scripture, God is referred to as a “redeemer” (same Hebrew words as in Ruth).
 - Psalm 19:14 “Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, my rock **and my redeemer.**” (See also Ps. 78:35).
 - Isaiah 41:14 “I am the one who helps you, declares the Lord; **your Redeemer** is the Holy One of Israel.”
- In the New Testament, Jesus is described as our “redeemer.”
 - Galatians 3:13 “Christ **redeemed** us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”
 - Titus 2:14 “who gave himself for us to **redeem** us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works.”
 - Note that as our redeemer, Jesus was a close relative of us (by becoming human) and the process of redeeming us came at a high price (shedding his blood).

