

Note

Ruth – Part 1

Era	Characters	Chapters
In the beginning	God created the world.	Genesis 1
Before 4000 BC	Adam & Eve	Gen 1~5
Before 3000 BC	Cain Abel Seth	Gen 4~5
Before 2500 BC	Noah	Gen 5~10
About 2000 BC Era of Patriarchs	Abraham Isaac & Ishmael Jacob & Esau Joseph	Gen 11~50
Era of prophets	About 1500 BC~1000 BC Moses Aaron Joshua	Exodus Leviticus Numbers Deuteronomy
	Joshua	Joshua
	Judges(Othniel Ehad Shamgar Deborah Gideon Tola Jair Jephthah Ibzan Elon Abdon Samson) Abimelech	Judges
	Ruth Boaz Naomi	Ruth

Summary

Ruth - Part 1 of 13

While God is hardly mentioned, He is not absent, but actively ever-present behind the scenes.

This history of one little family begins in Bethlehem (House of Bread). We see the faith of Ruth, the Moabitess, in choosing to accompany Naomi, her mother-in-law, back to Israel. As we make right decisions, God directs us. Thus at the end Ruth becomes the great-grandmother of King David (predecessor to Messiah). A perfect ending in contrast to the tragic ending of Judges, when there was no king.

We see foreshadowing of the kinsman redeemer and the gentile bride of the coming Messianic King.

Transcript

Ruth – Part 1 of 1

Today, we come to the study of a very little book called Ruth.

In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth is in the same scroll as the Book of Judges. The Jews believe that Samuel wrote these two books and they combined them into one book for a very good reason. In our Bible, it's a separate book, but it's actually back to back with one another.

Now, if you think of these two books as one book, it's kind of hard to picture it. They are such contrasting books.

Judges is a book about a lot of people, over 200 years.

Ruth is about one family, over one generation.

Judges is a National Book, the history of Israel.

Ruth is a history of one little family.

Judges is full of violence and horrible things with a terrible ending.

Ruth is so beautiful, a love story with a beautiful ending.

The Book of Judges	vs	The Book of Ruth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About A Lot of People • Over 200 years • History of Israel • Full of Violence • A Terrible Ending 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About One Family • One Generation • History of One Family • Beautiful Love Story • A Great Ending

Then, we see the style of Judges, it's like, seven cycles of sin and oppression. They said, "Sorry" to God, God sent a deliverer, then they had peace, and then they start again - seven cycles like that.

Ruth is one straight line. What happened next, next, next, and 'they lived happily ever after'.

Very contrasting books, and yet they fit perfectly together as one book, as we will find out, at the end of this lesson.

Another thing you'll notice about the Book of Ruth is that God is hardly ever mentioned. It says that 'your God will be my God'. God is, like, mentioned in passing. It's not like as if He's an active part of this story. He's actually in the background. And this is so brilliant because everyday in our life, God is involved, but He is not in the front. In fact, most of us do not even realize He is planning, He is helping, He is involved, He's feeling happy, He's feeling sad about what we do. He's there, but He's behind the scenes.

So, it's, like, providential. It's not, like, "Wow, when you see God do a miracle then, 'Ah, God is present'. Then, the rest of the time He is absent." No, no, no, He is present all the time, but He doesn't get in the way. He allows us to have our life, make our own decisions, and yet like a father watching from the back, concerned and trying his best to help us walk in the right direction. So, the presence of God in this book is like the presence of God in our life today.

So now, let's just look into these four little chapters. It begins with this line, 'Now, it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled,' - that's the first verse.

The context of this Book of Ruth is exactly in the time of the Judges - in other words, the darkest period of Israel or almost the darkest period of their history - this horrible time. Then it says, 'that there was a famine in the land', verse 1. Of course, when people are not obeying God, God punishes them. And God's way of punishing in those days, was to hold back the rain. When there was no rain, there's famine. So, there was famine in the land. And it says, 'a certain man of Bethlehemjudah', Bethlehem in the place of Judah. We see here a contrast. The word 'Bethlehem' simply means 'house of bread'. You see the word 'Beth-', 'Beth-', 'Beth-', 'Bethany', 'Bethaven'. Beth is house. Bethlehem is house of bread. In the house of bread, there was no bread. There was a famine. Why? Because they had disobeyed God.

And it tells us, this man then decides to go to the Land of Moab to look for food. Moab is the enemy of the Israelites, an ancient enemy. So, he runs off to Moab to look for food. That's not what he should have done. Because in the time of famine, God was telling them, "I am angry with you". What do you do when God's telling you He is angry with you? Run away? No. Say, "Sorry, God, I am sorry, please forgive me", and get back right with God, and God will provide. God should have provided for this man but he ran away. So, we see here that just in this little story, it is speaking of a man who ran away. And what was his punishment? He died. This man, Elimelech, died.

And his two sons then married two Moabite Girls, Orpah and Ruth. And what happened to them? They died. Why? Because they were not supposed to marry people who had different gods. They married when they should not have married, and so they died. But the two girls whom they married, they're innocent. They didn't know God's law, so they survived.

So now, we have the widow - mom Naomi and the two daughters-in-law. Naomi tells them, "I'm going back to Israel". She realized, probably, something was wrong, and so she said, "I'm going back", and she told her two daughters-in-law, "Don't go back with me. Life is gonna be really hard for a Gentile in Israel. Please just stay here".

So, the first one, Orpah, said, "Okay, I'm staying here".

The second said, "No, I'm going with you. Your God will be my God".

Now the question is: Why did Ruth have such a faith in a God she had not really known? Faith comes by hearing, hearing by the Word of God. How did she have faith?

Obviously, it was through Naomi's life, Naomi's testimony, Naomi's sharing about her God, that she began to say, "Your God is my God. The God you believe in is the God I believe in." We see here her faith, simple faith of Ruth the Moabitess, in the God of Israel. So, they're going to go back to Israel.

And Naomi changes her name. She said, "Don't call me Naomi anymore, call me Mara." Naomi means pleasant, nice. Mara means bitter, sad.

Mara is the root name of the name Mary. Some of you who've got names like Mary, Marie, in Israel it's actually, Miriam. Miriam is the name Mary. The root word is bitterness. Maybe some of you Marys don't know your name means bitter.

They go back and then they need to look for food in Israel. In Israel, there was law given in the Torah, that when you glean your harvest, whatever that drops on the floor you leave it for the poor, the widows, the foreigners. And so, Ruth goes out to look for food during harvest time. It was the beginning of harvest, and it happened that she went to a field of a relative of Elimelech, her father-in-law. She didn't know that. You see this is how

God is working behind the scenes. As she desires to do right, God directs her. So, as we make right decisions, God directs us.

And Boaz, sort of, takes an interest in her, “Who’s that girl?” And they said, “Oh, that's Naomi. Remember Naomi, your relative’s wife’s? This is the daughter-in-law.” And they said, “She's so loyal. She's a Moabitess and she followed her mother- in-law to Israel.”

And so Boaz had a little eye on her. And Boaz tells her, “You just harvest, you just glean during my harvest season.” Harvest goes on for several weeks. And then, “You just take whatever you want, and my guys will take care of you.” So, he showed a little interest in her. So, during the full harvest period, he's there supervising, she's there picking up the harvest that drops on the ground. The harvesters are not supposed to pick it up, but to allow them to pick it up. So, she brings home the food everyday for Naomi.

Now, at the end of harvest, Naomi senses that Ruth likes Boaz a lot. You know, women have a sixth sense, they can sense these things, guys are very blur with these things. So, she said to Ruth, “Change your clothes”. You see, at that time, when you were a widow and your husband had died, you wore widow’s clothes, to show your mourning. “Change your widow’s clothes, change to clothes that show that you are willing to get married.” So, a lot of it is symbolic by the way they dress.

And she said, “At the end of harvest, they're going to have a celebration and Boaz is going to have a nice feast. And he's going to sleep there near the harvest, near the place where they harvest all the stuff and keep all the barley harvests. He's going to rest there that night after the celebration. What I want you to do is to go and lie down quietly by his feet.”

What's going on? The custom in those days is a girl cannot propose to a guy. There was no way that ever took place, not acceptable. But a girl could hint, could suggest, that she wants you to propose to her. And the way they

do it is to warm the feet of the man. So, she went and lay near the feet of Boaz - that was her way; and he woke up with a shock, "Who's this person laying on my feet?" And then he realizes what it is. And he says to her, "Ah, yes, I would like to take you for my wife, but there is a relative who is closer to your husband's family than me."

Again, this is a custom in Israel. In Israel, all land was given to families. As families got poor along the way, they sold their land. But after 50 years, at the Jubilee, all land reverts back to the original family.

In other words, if Elimelech's family died and Ruth's husband died, then, if there are no kids, that land doesn't go back to the family of her husband. The rule in Israel was, if a widow had no kids, the next of kin should marry her so that a kid would be born, a male kid would be born. And that male kid would carry the name, not of the guy who married her but of the original husband - so that the name will continue. And so that at the 50th year, it will go back again to the original family. So, this is what Boaz said, "I want to marry you, but I don't have the first rights, there is another relative closer".

The next day, he went to the city, and all the elders gathered, and the other relative who was closer was also there. And Boaz said to him that, "Ruth has come back and you are next of kin, you are the closest relative. Please marry her to bring seed, to bring a name so that the land could go back to the name of her late husband."

Then, that man said, "Yeah, okay. I like the land, I want it. But I don't want to marry this girl, I can't." For various reasons, maybe his wife didn't like it or whatever, I don't know.

And so, he said, "I won't take the land, I won't buy the land. I won't marry this girl." And so, the rights, then, pass on to the next in line, which is Boaz. So, Boaz marries her.

Now there's a funny custom there that when this first kin, the next in line, didn't want it, he took off his shoe and gave it to Boaz. What in the world is this? When you take off your shoe and give it to someone, it is a way of shaking hands in those days, like, "Deal done. All right. Thank you for

offering it to me but I don't want it. Thank you very much. You can have the deal." So that's the little custom.

Now you say, "What's this story all about?" So finally, Boaz marries Ruth and they have babies, and they have children and they live happily ever after. You'd think, "What kind of story is this? What's this got to do with the Bible?" Maybe it shows God's providence in the backend, to help a poor lady get a home and get food, and the poor mother-in-law. It's much more than that, because the last part of Ruth tells us a baby was born. His name was Obed. And Obed had a son, called Jesse. And Jesse had a son, called David. So, what happens is that Ruth the Moabite, the Gentile, became the great grandmother of King David, the Royal line, through whom the Messiah would come. Now, I hope you're seeing the picture.

Because Judges ends by saying, 'And there was no king in Israel at that time' - the last line of Judges - 'and every man did that which was right in his own eyes'. In other words, oh my goodness, no wonder there is chaos. Because there is no leadership, there is no king.

And then, the Book of Ruth comes and says, 'Aha! David has come'.

And all the Jews, when they read the Book of Ruth is, like, "Whoa! Ruth is the one that helped produce David, the king of Israel".

We Christians say, "Wow! It's Ruth that helped produce David, the ancestor of Jesus Christ, our Messiah".

So that's how it links up.

Judges has such a horrible ending because there is no one to lead, no one to help Israel, in their misery. Then, Ruth comes and the story ends with this Royal beginning of a Royal line.

I hope you see how the Bible always links up. Judges shows a terrible ending. Ruth shows a very promising ending, with the word, David.

Interestingly, the ancestors of David were Boaz and Ruth. They produced a son called Obed, then Jesse, then David. Now, Gentile blood came in, right? Ruth is a Moabitess.

Then if you look at Matthew chapter one, Matthew 1:5, you see the name of Boaz. Of course, it's spelled a little different in Greek, their way of spelling of Boaz is B-O-O-Z, not B-O-A-Z, Booz - that's the Greek version of the spelling of his name. And you'll find that Boaz himself had Gentile blood. He was a descendant of Rahab. Of course, it's spelled a little different in Matthew, it's spelled Rachab, that's again the Greek spelling. Rahab was the first Gentile believer in Canaan. Remember the story of Jericho? The prostitute, Rahab, is an ancestor of Boaz. And Ruth is a Moabitess.

So, he's part Gentile and Ruth is Gentile,
and they produced Obed,
and then Obed produced Jesse,
and Jesse produced David.

I hope you're getting it - Gentile blood was coming in, into the pure Royal line of Israel. What is this a hint of? One day, the Gentiles will come in into this family that God is planning.

So, I hope you see here a little bit of the hint, the beautiful connections in the Bible, the nice, beautiful weaving, the tapestry.

Now, this is a romance story. The one before, the Book of Judges is about war, violence and horrible things. This one is romance, so beautiful. What is it telling us? What is the whole Bible about? The horrible sinfulness of our nature, terrible nature causing violence, sex, immorality and all that injustice.

But, actually, the Redemption story is a Romance story, about Jesus looking for a bride.

So, we see here, Boaz, he is called a redeemer. In Israel, a man who takes in a widow is called a kinsman redeemer. He redeems this poor, helpless widow and gives her a son to carry the name.

Jesus is our Redeemer. He helps us helpless people, sinful helpless people with no future, no inheritance. And what happened is, Jesus took us in as His bride.

I hope you see a little bit of “the hint”. It’s not very clear, but it's a hint of this - the Gentile bride, you and me, taken in by our Redeemer, the King of Israel.

So, I hope this story helps us to see a little bit of how God is going to solve the mess in Judges. Judges is the book where you think how do you redeem these people? They are such a mess. And then, you see this nice encouraging story.

Some questions are going to be brought up, like, “You say that, you cannot marry a Gentile, how come Boaz married a Gentile?” I was asked that question once. Boaz was just doing his duty, to help. This is his duty, as a

kinsman redeemer, to take this widow in. So, he wasn't doing something wrong; he was doing something to “obey” the rule of God, to be a kinsman redeemer. As opposed to Mahlon and Chilion, the two guys who originally married Orpah and Ruth. They were not doing their duty, they just found a pretty girl in Moab and they just married her, against God's rules, so they got punished. But Boaz was blessed because he was obeying God - to be a kinsman redeemer. And Boaz becomes, also, an ancestor of the royal line, David, and then, Jesus.

So, I hope this story helps you to see again the Beautiful Book and how it's all slowly coming closer and closer to this glorious marriage in the Book of Revelation - the romance of Christ and us. The relationship we have is a love relationship.

Boaz loved Ruth. Ruth was loyal. She was a loyal girl. She was loyal to her mother-in-law. And now she will be loyal to her husband.

So, I hope this is a beautiful story to end a very awful story in the Book of Judges.

God bless.