

# Ruth

Dec 11, 2022

## Summary:

### Chapter 1: Where's the bread?

Ruth opens with the words, "In the days when the judges ruled there was a famine in the land, and a man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the country of Moab." This is almost comical, since Bethlehem is a compound word in the Hebrew, combining beth, "house," with lehem, "bread." Bethlehem, the House of Bread, has no more bread in it!

Elimelech, Naomi and their two sons leave Bethlehem because of the famine and go to the land of the Moabites (idolatrous descendants of Lot). The two sons married two Moabites girls: Orpah and Ruth. After 10 years the father and both sons died, and Naomi decides to return to Bethlehem. Orpah remained behind but Ruth went with her.

Naomi hears that "the Lord had visited his people and given them food" (1:6), and so she returns.

### Chapter 2: The wings of the Lord

We are introduced to Boaz the son of Rehab of Jericho (Mt 1:5). He, being a relative of Naomi and Ruth took notice of Ruth gleaning in his field and treated her kindly.

### Chapter 3: Finding rest

The chapter begins and ends with the theme of rest. In 3:1, Naomi asks Ruth, "My daughter, should I not seek rest for you, that it may be well with you?" Then in the last verse of the chapter, Naomi assures Ruth that Boaz "will not rest but will settle the matter today" (3:18).

### Chapter 4: A son who anticipates the Son

The story concludes with Boaz and Ruth being married, and Ruth giving birth to a son. We see a shift from Boaz to his son Obed, who is the father of Jesse, the father of David, who points us to Jesus, "the son of David"

## Notes:

Two books of the Bible bear the name of a woman: Ruth and Esther.

Ruth was the Gentile who married a Jew, and Esther was a Jewess who married a Gentile. The book of Ruth is the only book of the Bible that is wholly devoted to the history of a woman. This story shows that God uses Gentile blood to form the chosen family within the chosen nation which would bring forth the Messiah for all nations.

### The Tribe of Judah

"Judah" was Jacob's son who received his father's blessing at the end of Genesis.

Gen 49:10 The scepter shall not depart from Judah, Nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, Until Shiloh comes,

### The Town of Bethlehem

Judah would be the tribe of the future king, and Bethlehem would be his town.

"But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from old, from ancient days" (Mic 5:2).

### What does redeem (redemption) mean?

It's the act of paying off a debt or the act of someone else doing it for you. It's the action of regaining or gaining possession of something in exchange for payment or clearing a debt. It can also be the act of being saved from faults, sin, error, or evil. The language of redemption is all over the Book of Ruth. Words built on the root "redeem" appear 23 different times in 4 chapters. The Book of Ruth points us to Jesus, the Ultimate Redeemer, 1,000 years before He was born.

## Christ is seen as:

1. "Bethlehem" – Jesus is the bread of life (Jn 6:26-40)

Jn 6:35 Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life; he who comes to Me will not hunger, and he who believes in Me will never thirst."

2. As a Mighty Man

The name Boaz means "strength." He was a mighty man of wealth, which can also be translated as "a mighty man of war"

Jesus is our mighty man of "strength" (Eph 1:9, 6:10; 1Pt 4:11),  
mighty man of "wealth" (Isa 33:6),  
mighty man of "war" (Isa 42:13).

3. Refuge under the wings of the Lord.

Ruth 2:12 "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

This points to the redemptive work of Jesus

"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, the way a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were unwilling." (Mt 23:37, Lk 13:34)

We see a pagan, idolatrous Gentile willingly come under the wings of the Lord. Whereas Israel refused to come under His wings. This is a stunning twist of irony; God's own people reject their Messiah which opened the door for the nations – to come under His wing of protection from God's wrath.

This points to the rest that Jesus gives

"Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. "For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." (Mt 11:29-30)

Heb 4:9-10 So there remains a Sabbath rest for the people of God. For the one who has entered His rest has himself also rested from his works, as God did from His. (Heb 4:1-11)

4. The Lord of the Harvest (2:4-17),

Boaz says to the reapers (2:4-5); Boaz is the lord of the harvest.

And He was saying to them, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest". (Lk 10:2; Mt 9:37-38)

5. The Kinsman Redeemer - Boaz

This closer relative would have the first right of redemption. The responsibility of redemption would go first to the deceased person's brother, then uncle, then cousin, then another "close relative" (Lev 25:48-49). The exact relationship between Boaz, the other relative, and Elimelech is unclear.

When Boaz learned of Naomi and Ruth's situation, he chose to redeem Naomi's family name by marrying Ruth. Notwithstanding, it would cost him his inheritance.

Col 1:13-14 For He rescued us from the domain of darkness, and transferred us to the kingdom of His beloved Son, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (Eph 1:7; Rom 3:24)

6. Ruth also provides us with a beautiful picture of the church, being a Gentile; a stranger and foreigner of the covenants of promise, was brought into the commonwealth of Israel by the grace of the kinsmen -- redeemer.

Eph 2:11-13 Therefore remember that formerly you, the Gentiles in the flesh, who are called "Uncircumcision" by the so-called "Circumcision," which is performed in the flesh by human hands — 12 remember that you were at that time separate from Christ, excluded from the commonwealth of Israel, and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. 13 But now in Christ Jesus you who formerly were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.

7. Messiah would be a descendant of Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 4:12-17). There are five ways this son points to the birth of Jesus, God's Son.

1. This son is born in Bethlehem (4:11).

2. This son is referred to as "the offspring" (seed)

Ruth 4:12 "Moreover, may your house be like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah, through the offspring [literally seed] which the LORD will give you by this young woman."

"Seed" is first used of Eve's offspring who will crush the head of the serpent (Gen 3:15).

Later this word is used in reference to the offspring of Abraham who will inherit the land (Gen 17:7-8), and the offspring of David who will sit on the throne forever (2Sam 7:12). Each of these promises are fulfilled in Jesus (Rev 13:3, Gal 3:15-16; Lk 1:32-33).

3. This son was conceived through a unique demonstration of God's power, "and the Lord gave her conception" (4:13). Jesus also would be conceived in an even greater demonstration of power, in a virgin.

4. The women of the town bless Naomi, saying the son, "shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age" (4:15). The delightful renewal Naomi experienced was only foretaste of the complete restoration of eternal life that God's Son would provide.

5. This son is the next step toward the coming of David, from whom would come the Messiah, Jesus (4:17-22, see the genealogies in Mt 1 and Lk 3).