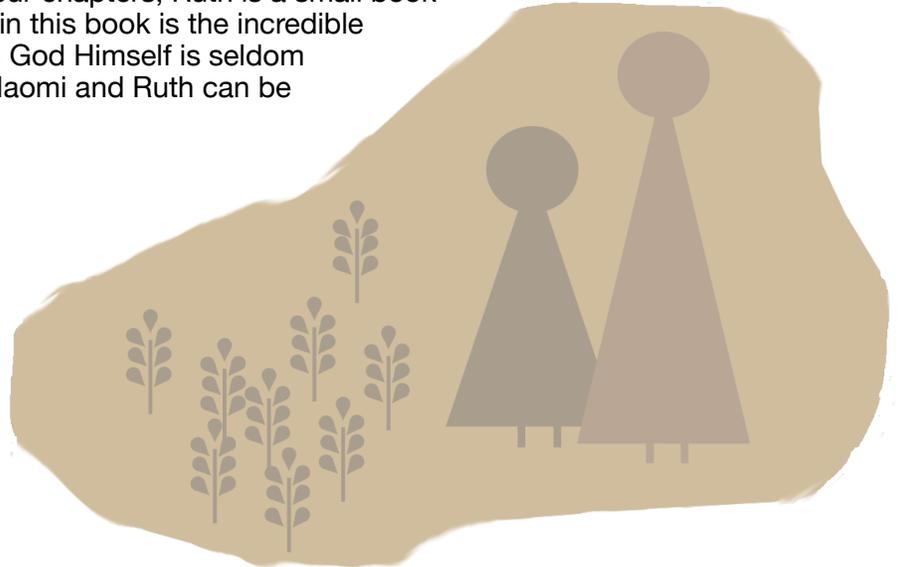


RUTH (pt1)

A Story of Redemption

The book of Ruth is powerful. Just four chapters, Ruth is a small book easily read in one sitting. Contained in this book is the incredible story of God's redemption. Although God Himself is seldom mentioned, His work in the lives of Naomi and Ruth can be found on each page.



The story of Ruth focuses on three main characters, Naomi, the Moabite widow Ruth, and Boaz, an Israelite farmer. The story begins in the days of the judges, a difficult and unfaithful time for Israel. It is also during a famine that we pick up the story of Ruth and Naomi.

RUTH 1:1 (NASB)

"Now it came about in the days when the judges governed, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem in Judah went to sojourn in the land of Moab with his wife and his two sons."

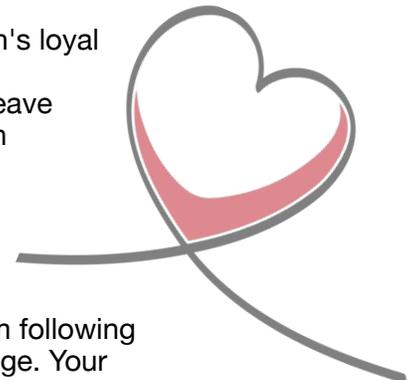


Elimelech, seeking to escape the famine, moves his wife Naomi and their two sons to the land of Moab. Moab was an ancient enemy of Israel (ref. Judges 3:12-31; 2 Kings 3). While in the land, Elimelech's sons take two Moabite wives, Ruth and Orpah. In a tragic turn of events, Naomi suffers the loss of her husband and two sons. With no resources left in Moab, Naomi decides to return home Bethlehem, where she has heard there is food. Naomi is in a destitute situation, and the decision to return home would not be an easy journey. In what seems to be an act of compassion, Naomi releases her daughters-in-law to return home to their fathers. The story of Ruth, Naomi, and God's redemption begins.

PROLOGUE	JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM	GLEANING THE FIELDS	ADVICE OF A WIDOW	A NOBLE MAN	EPILOGUE
1: 1-5	1: 6-22	2: 1-23	3: 1-18	4: 1-12	4: 13-22
In the days when the judges judged, there was a famine in the land. <small>REF. RUTH 1: 1 WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE</small>	Ruth said, "Don't urge me to leave you, and to return from following you, for where you go, I will go; and where you stay, I will stay." <small>REF. RUTH 1: 16 WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE</small>	She went, and came and gleaned in the field after the reapers; and she happened to come to the portion of the field belonging to Boaz <small>REF. RUTH 2: 1 WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE</small>	She said to her, "All that you say, I will do." She went down to the threshing floor, and did everything that her mother-in-law told her. <small>RUTH 3: 5-6 WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE</small>	Boaz said to the elders and to all the people, "You are witnesses today, that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. <small>RUTH 4: 9 WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE</small>	The women, her neighbors, gave him a name, saying, "A son is born to Naomi". They named him Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David. <small>RUTH 4: 17 WORLD ENGLISH BIBLE</small>

Through the literary design of Ruth, several movements take place. The return to Jerusalem (1: 6-22), gleaned the fields (2: 1-23), the advice of Naomi (3: 1-18), and the nobleman Boaz (4: 1-12). The design of Ruth is a profound theological exploration inviting us to consider how God is involved with the daily hardships we each experience. Is God working through our decisions and choices to accomplish His purposes? This is one of the questions we should contemplate as we read Ruth.

One of the most striking images we discover in this short book is Ruth's loyal and selfless love, an expression of God's love. Naomi releases her daughters-in-law to return to their fathers. However, Ruth refuses to leave the side of Naomi. She expresses her love as she pledges to stay with Naomi even in the uncertainty of the days ahead



RUTH 1:16-17 (NASB)

“But Ruth said, “Do not urge me to leave you or turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the Lord do to me, and worse, if anything but death parts you and me.”

From their story, God works His story as we read of the promised Messiah through Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz. Ruth is a powerful story of redemption through difficulties, trials, and hardships.

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