

Ruth

Purpose: To establish the legitimacy of David's kingship despite his Moabite ancestress.

Outline: 1:1-22 – Naomi's Bitterness

2:1-23 – Ruth discovers potential Kinsman Redeemer

3:1-18 – Boaz agrees to be Kinsman Redeemer

4:1-12 – Boaz acquires right to be Kinsman Redeemer

4:13-17 – Naomi's Blessing

4:18-21 – Genealogical Appendix

Author: Jewish tradition says Samuel

Date: Events during period of judges

Written Document – Probably during reign of David (1010-970).

Genealogy of David shows that David had become king. That may have been a later appendix. Some literary elements of the Hebrew suggest it was written during the Monarchy.

Reading Ruth(April 7):

It takes less than 10 minutes to read this profoundly beautiful story. The literary structure of Ruth is remarkable in every way. Ruth has been rightly characterized as a novella with an introduction, five acts, and a postlude.

Ruth stands in contrast to the Judges. While the Israelites were abandoning God for foreign gods here is a Moabitess converting to follow God. This is an event during the period of the Judges, probably around the time of Jephthah. Certainly later than Ehud in Judges 3 where he is attacking the Moabites. In the Hebrew Bible, Ruth is not part of the Former Prophets (Deuteronomistic), but the Writings.

Moabites descend from Abraham's nephew Lot. (Genesis 19:37). Moabites were sometimes antagonistic, and sometimes sympathetic to Israel. Definitely, pro-David. Another theme is to show how the faith continued amongst the pagan anarchy shown in the Judges. It was the common folk (like local churches) that maintained the faith.

Other Major themes: 1) Even a Moabitess can be faithful to the Lord and gain full membership in Israel. 2) Qualities of loyalty and covenant faithfulness in a foreigner can be a model for Israel's response to the Lord. 3) The Lord as Redeemer will restore the exiled family of Israel to its land.

Kinsman-Redeemer (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). If a man died without having a son, his brother was obligated to bear a son by his widow. That son would thereafter be considered the heir to the dead brother's household. In this way families could not easily die out. Likewise, land sold by a person could be bought back by a relative so as to keep the land in the family. Land law and Levirate marriage were intended to preserve family and land.

God constantly acted as the kinsman-redeemer for Israel. Christ is our redeemer.

Hebrew word "hesed" is often translated mercy (in KJV) lovingkindness (in NAS) kindness, love, loyalty...(in NIV)

Chapter1– Naomi's Bitterness

-In the midst of Naomi's heartbreak is the faithfulness of Ruth – "Where you go I will go, and where you stay I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God" (1:16).

Chapter2 – Ruth Discovers Potential Kinsman-Redeemer

-The beauty of this story is in presenting what life should have looked like during the period of the judges. The Law can be lived out by those who choose to follow the Lord who acts mercifully. God's people respond by loving the Lord and loving their neighbor, which especially includes the foreigner, the orphan, and the widow.

Chapter3 – Boaz Agrees to be Kinsman-Redeemer

-Slightly different courtship practices than we have in modern America. The moral integrity of Naomi, Ruth, and especially Boaz is remarkable – particularly against the immoral backdrop of the Book of Judges.

Chapter4– Boaz Becomes Kinsman-Redeemer

-The elders of the town meet at the town gate for formal meetings in public. The proper steps are followed (ancient “Roberts Rules of Order”), so that the Boaz becomes kinsman-redeemer in good and decent order 😊. The concluding genealogy points to the reality that Boaz and Ruth are the great-grandparents of King David, and are thus ancestors to Jesus himself.