

## THE LIFE OF RUTH

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## BIBLICAL STUDIES

### Abstract

The book of Ruth is based on historical events, but is also a love story, tragedy, and a picture of the “Kinsman Redeemer” which is a type of Christ.

Although Ruth is only four chapters long it is a very important book as it depicts the lineage of Jesus Christ. Without the book of Ruth there would be gaps not only in the family line of Jesus, but also of King David.

There are a couple of things that make the book of Ruth very significant in the Bible; the book of Ruth is one of the two books named after women (The other book being Esther) and Ruth is the primary character or heroine if you will of the book.

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## CHAPTER I

### ”RUTH, A WOMAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY”

The book of Ruth is thought to have been authored by the prophet Samuel. The timeline estimated for the date that Ruth was written was thought to have been during the times of the book of Judges 1370 to 1041 B.C

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Ruth#Authorship](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Ruth#Authorship)

Chapter one of Ruth gives the background to our story; we read that and Ruth is a Moabite and is widowed. Ruth’s brother-in law and father-in law (who are Israelites) die as well. The story picks up with three women, Naomi, Ruth’s mother-in-law and Orpah, Ruth's sister-in-law.

Ten years earlier this Jewish family of six, had fled Israel and went to Moab because there was a famine in the land. Naomi's two sons married to Moabite women, which had been forbidden according to Jewish law.

According to Genesis Chapter 19 the Moabites and Ammonites are descendents of an incestuous relationship between Lot and his two daughters. This was due to the fact that after Sodom and Gomorrah had been destroyed, the two daughters had believed that they and their father Lot were the only inhabitants left on the earth.

Naomi advises her daughters in law that she intends to return to Israel and she pleads with her daughters in law to return to their father's house.

Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and decides to return to her father's house however, after much pleading, Ruth practically begs Naomi to stay with her. Naomi does not understanding what Ruth's intentions are and ash begins to explain to Ruth the facts; they have no money, no assets, and nowhere to go, except home. Naomi also being

familiar with Jewish custom, realizes that Ruth still a young woman and can therefore remarry.

I am sure that Naomi contemplated whether or not Ruth as a Moabite woman would be accepted in her home country.

Ruth becomes very insistent with Naomi and tells Naomi she will follow her wherever she goes. Ruth has also decided to worship the true and Living God of Israel and gives up worshipping Chemosh; the Moabite god that was thought to be the equivalent of Moloch for the Ammonites. ([www.wikipedia.org/wiki/chemosh](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/chemosh) 2007) Chemosh and Moloch were believed to be false gods that the Moabites and Ammonites had sacrificed their children in the fire to appease their gods.

According to *I Kings 11:7-13* these two false gods and others were introduced to Israel by King Solomon when he intermarried with foreign women that brought their pagan practices into the palace.

## CHAPTER II

### ”BOAZ, THE KINSMAN REDEEMER”

Naomi had a relative (kinsman) of her husband. Usually, when a woman's husband died, it was up to her husband's brother to marry her in his place and so keep the man's lineage alive through any sons born to him (if there was no brother, then the next nearest relative, and so-on down the line of relatives)

Boaz came to know who Ruth was. He arranged it with his servants working there, that she could work freely without harassment and glean the food that she required for herself and Naomi. (Boaz did not just give her a "handout" - he made sure that there would be plenty there waiting for her but she would have to work in order to receive it!)

Ruth behaved herself and did her best for her mother-in-law, and she worked honestly to get food for both of them. Naomi tells Ruth who Boaz is, a kinsman.

Naomi tells Ruth what to do in order for them to be redeemed from their situation, and Ruth did not object but agreed to do all she was told to do.

Ruth carried out the instructions given her by Naomi and told Boaz exactly what Naomi told her to say, and Boaz recognized that she was telling the truth.

In the book of Ruth Chapter 3, Naomi tells Ruth to present herself to Boaz. Boaz had too much to drink in celebrating the plentiful harvest from his fields. One Jewish custom was that Naomi would present herself to Boaz by laying at his feet and covering herself with the hem of his garment. Dr. Chuck Missler mentions that the hem of the garment in biblical times was representative of status in the community. Because Boaz was a wealthy land owner and he was kinsman to Naomi, Ruth in essence staked claim to Boaz as Naomi had instructed her. This in turn would ensure Naomi that Ruth would be

well taken care of as a gesture of Naomi honoring Ruth for her faithfulness to stay with her mother-in-law.

Boaz knew that there was a closer relative than he was and so that closer relative had the right to redeem Naomi and Ruth, and he could marry Ruth if he so desired to. Boaz also did what was correct and did not take advantage of Ruth's situation.

Boaz recognizing that he was not in fact the closest living relative presented his case at the city gate. This would have been the place of government for the city. The actual kinsman Redeemer had to fulfill two requirements, he had to be willing and able to fulfill his commitment. Boaz engaged the closer living relative who was not able or willing to fulfill his commitment as kinsman.

A symbol of his forfeiting his Redeemer role was mentioned in Ruth Chapter 4:7 *“Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging to confirm anything, one man took off his sandal and give it to the other, and this was confirmation in Israel.”*

By the closer kinsmen offering his sandal as a public gesture, he forfeited any rights or claims as Naomi's kinsman Redeemer and to marry Ruth. This would pave the way for Boaz to fulfill that role as Redeemer and take Ruth as a wife.

When Naomi asked Ruth how she got into Boaz's tent; Ruth tells Naomi everything - there were no secrets between them. Boaz legally redeemed Naomi and Ruth, taking Ruth as his wife.

Dr. Missler also states that it would have been against Jewish custom for Boaz to take Ruth as a wife because of her Moabite lineage. However, he makes it clear on two points, that Ruth had taken the faith of Naomi and had chosen to worship the one true

God. It is mentioned that Boaz did not have a pre-disposition against a Moabite wife is because his mother was Rahab prostitute, mentioned in Joshua Chapter 6:17.

Therefore, Boaz would have been a first-hand observer of God's faithfulness and redemption through his blood line.

Ruth had a son named Obed, the father of Jesse, the father of David who became the king and prophet of God (refer to Matthew 1:5 and 6 & James 2:25).

The whole idea of a kinsman redeemer in the Book of Ruth I believe is a foreshadowing of the Gospel message.

Naomi is representative of the children of Israel and Ruth is representative of sinful, rebellious humanity that needs a Redeemer. Boaz is representative or "type" of Jesus as the Redeemer in the New Testament.

References

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([www.wikipedia.org/wiki/chemosh](http://www.wikipedia.org/wiki/chemosh) 2007)



**Gen 19:36-38** Thus both the daughters of Lot were with child by their father. 37 The firstborn bore a son and called his name Moab ; he is the father of the Moabites to this day. 38 And the younger, she also bore a son and called his name Ben-Ammi; he is the father of the people of Ammon to this day. NKJV

**1 Kings 11:7-13** Then Solomon built a high place for Chemosh the abomination of Moab, on the hill that is east of Jerusalem, and for Molech the abomination of the people of Ammon. 8 And he did likewise for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and sacrificed to their gods. 9 So the LORD became angry with Solomon, because his heart had turned from the LORD God of Israel, who had appeared to him twice, 10 and had commanded him concerning this thing, that he should not go after other gods; but he did not keep what the LORD had commanded. 11 Therefore the LORD said to Solomon, "Because you have done this, and have not kept My covenant and My statutes, which I have commanded you, I will surely tear the kingdom away from you and give it to your servant. 12 Nevertheless I will not do it in your days, for the sake of your father David; I will tear it out of the hand of your son. 13 However I will not tear away the whole kingdom; I will give one tribe to your son for the sake of My servant David, and for the sake of Jerusalem which I have chosen." NKJV

**Ruth 4:7-10** Now this was the custom in former times in Israel concerning redeeming and exchanging, to confirm anything: one man took off his sandal and gave it to the other, and this was a confirmation in Israel. 8 Therefore the close relative said to Boaz, "Buy it for yourself." So he took off his sandal. 9 And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech's, and all that was Chilion's and Mahlon's, from the hand of Naomi. 10 Moreover, Ruth the

Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day."

NKJV

**Joshua 6:17** Now the city shall be doomed by the LORD to destruction, it and all who are in it. Only Rahab the harlot shall live, she and all who are with her in the house, because she hid the messengers that we sent. NKJV

**Matt 1:5** Salmon begot Boaz by Rahab, Boaz begot Obed by Ruth, Obed begot Jesse, 6 and Jesse begot David the king. 6 and Jesse begot David the king. NKJV

**James 2:25** Likewise, was not Rahab the harlot also justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out another way? NKJV