

From the Garden to Glory

Ruth

Author: Unknown

Timeline: c. 1278 - 1268 B.C.

Location: Moab
Bethlehem

Category: History

Theme: Redemption

Overview:

The book of Ruth is a beautiful picture of love and devotion which stands out in stark contrast in the dark days of the Judges. Ruth was a young Moabite woman who believed in the true and the living God. Boaz was a near kinsman who performed his duty as a kinsman-redeemer.

Introduction:

As Ruth turned away from her pagan heritage and turned toward God, He rewarded her for her faithfulness. Before beginning your study of the book of Ruth, consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. As you have chosen to follow the Lord, what have you had to "leave behind"?
2. How has the Lord rewarded you for your faithfulness to follow Him and forsake the world?

3. Read Ephesians 3:20. How has the Lord blessed you "exceedingly, abundantly" above anything you could ask or even think?
4. The book of Ruth is a beautiful testimony of one woman's faithfulness to the Lord during the dark, rebellious years of the judges. How can you be a woman who is "in the world but not of it"?

Ruth's Decision

Read Ruth 1:1-18

1. Summarize verses 1-2.
2. The Moabites were idolaters and their worship of the god Chemosh included child sacrifice. Put yourself in Elimelech and Naomi's place. What are three specific things you could have done to protect yourself and your children from the pagan influences of Moab?
3. Look at verse 5. What do you think Ruth was thinking and feeling at this time?
4. Look carefully at verses 16-17. In addition to Ruth's confession of her faith and trust in the Lord, we also see her loyalty and commitment to Naomi. Who has shown loyalty and commitment to you? What did this person do? How did it impact your life?

Ruth's Devotion

Read Ruth 1:19-2:23

1. Look at 1:20. The name *Naomi* means "sweetness or pleasantness"; the name *Mara* means "bitter". Which is a better description of you? What is one thing you can do to become more sweet or pleasant? What is one thing you can do to become less bitter?

2. Look at 2:4. What did Boaz say to the reapers? What was their response to him? How is the Lord *with* you today? How has He blessed you today?

3. Read 2:7 and 17. How would you describe Ruth's "work ethic"? How would you describe your own "work ethic"? List one way you could improve in this area.

4. Look at 2:12 and read Psalm 91:1-4. There are many Scripture references which picture the Lord as a mother bird protecting her fragile babies with her wings. Look up the word *refuge* in a dictionary and write the definition. How is the Lord your refuge? What does it mean to "take refuge" under the Lord's wings? What do you experience when you do this? Be specific.

5. What does Naomi tell Ruth in 2:20? The phrase "one of our close relatives" refers to a kinsman-redeemer. According to John MacArthur, "the great theme of kinsman-redeemer begins here. A close relative could redeem
 1. a family member sold into slavery (Leviticus 25:47-49),
 2. land which needed to be sold under economic hardship (Leviticus 25:23-28), and/or
 3. the family name by virtue of levirate marriage (Deuteronomy 25:5-10)."

Ruth's Request

Read Ruth 3

1. In verse 2, we see that Boaz was *winnowing* barley. Look this word up in a dictionary and write the definition. What would you consider the "chaff" in your life? What would you consider the "grain"? What "winnowing" work is the Lord doing in your life today?
2. What was Ruth's response to Naomi in verse 5? Think about the last week. How have you responded to those in positions of authority over you? Is there a situation where you did not respond with immediate, complete and joyful obedience? If so, ask the Lord's forgiveness and then write down how you could have responded in a more godly manner.
3. Summarize verses 6-9. According to Walvoord and Zuck, there is nothing in the passage to support the idea that what Ruth did presented an opportunity for immorality. "Her mother-in-law had complete confidence in the integrity of the kinsman-redeemer. Boaz could be trusted to act responsibly. And Ruth was recognized by everyone as 'a woman of noble character' (v.11). The uncovering of the feet was completely proper. Probably the scene took place in the dark so that Boaz had the opportunity to reject the proposal without the whole town knowing about it."
4. What was Boaz's response (v. 10-13) to Ruth's request? If you were Ruth, how would you have felt?
5. Look at verse 18. What does this reveal about Boaz's character?

Ruth's Reward

Read Ruth 4

1. Summarize verses 1-12.

2. Look at the following verses in chapter 4 which refer to the position of kinsman-redeemer ("close relative") and make a note of everything you learn: 1,3,6,8, and 14.

3. Read the following quote from John MacArthur and look up the verses referred to in the parentheses, "Boaz pictures Christ, who as a Brother (Hebrews 2:17), redeemed those who
 1. were slaves to sin (Romans 6:15-18),
 2. had lost all earthly possessions/privileges in the Fall (Genesis 3:17-19) and
 3. had been alienated by sin from God (2 Corinthians 5:18-21)."

What does it mean to you that Jesus Christ is your Kinsman-Redeemer? How does this knowledge impact the way you live your life?

4. Look at verses 14-16. What was Naomi's condition at the end of the book of Ruth? What does it mean to be a "restorer of life and a nourisher"? How has the Lord been a Restorer and a Nourisher in your life?

5. Read the following words from W. Graham Scroggie, "After reading Judges...Ruth is like a lily in a stagnant pond. Here, instead of unfaithfulness, is loyalty; and instead of immorality, is purity. Here, instead of battlefields are harvest fields, and instead of the warrior's shout is the harvester's song." How does this encapsulate your life *before* and *after* coming to know the Lord as your Kinsman-Redeemer?

Summary

As you conclude your study of the book of Ruth consider the following questions and write your answers:

1. What is the most important lesson you have learned from your study of this book? How can you apply this lesson in your life this week?
2. What "new insights" did you learn about the Lord and yourself from your study?

3. List one way in which your study caused you to do each of the following:

Praise and worship the Lord:

Confess an area of sin to the Lord:

Thank the Lord:

Ask for something from the Lord: