



RUTH THE MOABITESS: RUTH 1-4

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Weeping, Working,
and Waiting toward a
Life of Legacy



THE STORY OF RUTH THE MOABITTESS

01

BACKGROUND

Who is Ruth and where
is she from?

02

WEEPING FORWARD

Ruth's response to
tremendous loss

03

WORKING FORWARD

God's divine providence
within Ruth's obedience

04

KINSMAN- REDEEMER

The possibility of redemption
for Ruth & Naomi

05

WAITING FORWARD

Ruth productively waits
for her redeemer

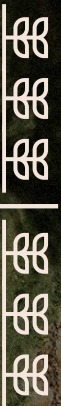
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LEAVING A LEGACY

Ruth & Boaz leave an
eternally significant legacy



01 BACKGROUND



Ruth 1:1-5



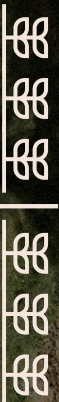
BACKGROUND

ELIMELECH & NAOMI:

- The book of Ruth was set during the time of the Judges, between the death of Joshua and Saul being anointed as king; this was a dark time of unrest and confusion, a time when “everyone did what was right in their own eyes” (Judges 17:6).
- Elimelech and Naomi are from Bethlehem in Judah, but choose to leave for Moab because there was a famine in the land. (Ruth 1:1)
- Israel was the land of God’s promise, and Moab was an enemy of Israel. (Deut. 23:3-6)
- Elimelech dies and their two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, both also died after having been married to their wives Ruth and Orpah for about a decade.
- This is obviously a heartbreaking loss for Naomi, but also causes a massive problem. The ancient Israelite society was patriarchal. It valued...
 - Survival of family through descendants (particularly male descendants)
 - Family ownership of ancestral property (sons would retain property and carry on the lineage)



O2 WEeping FORWARD



Ruth 1:6-18

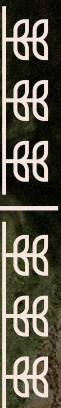


WEEPING FORWARD

- While she is in Moab, Naomi heard that the Lord had provided for his people and that the famine was over. God is drawing her back **even when she is far from Him**. (Ruth 1:6)
- “May the Lord show **kindness** to you as you have shown to the dead and to me.” (v. 8)
 - This is the first of many uses of the Hebrew word *Hesed*: the quality that moves a person to act for the benefit of another without respect to the advantage it might bring to the one who expresses it; “covenant loyalty” (like Yahweh’s covenant relationship with Israel)
- All three women are weeping (v. 9), but they are all weeping in different directions:
 - Orpah: responds to the common sense of Naomi’s argument and heads back to the familiar (vv. 14-15)
 - Naomi: moves forward to Bethlehem, but with a bitterness toward the Lord (vv. 13, 18)
 - Ruth: moves forward to Bethlehem, not just out of kindness to Naomi, but out of loyalty to the Lord (vv. 16-17)
- Ruth had to choose obedience even after **four** attempts by Naomi to change her mind. Obedience is often met with opposition. (Jas. 1:2-4)

A scenic landscape featuring a stone building with a grey roof on the left, a path leading through a field of yellow flowers in the center, and a dense forest of green trees on the right. The text "O3 WORKING FORWARD" is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font.

O3 WORKING FORWARD



Ruth 1:19-2:18

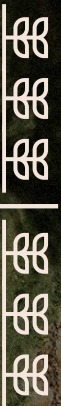


WORKING FORWARD

- When Ruth and Naomi arrive in Bethlehem, the women of the town are so excited. This indicates that Naomi was once well-loved, in fact, her name means “pleasantness, delight”. She tells the women to now call her Mara, meaning “bitter”, blaming the Lord for her affliction. (vv. 20-21)
 - Our circumstances are not our truest indicator of God’s heart toward us... His word is.
- Ruth and Naomi arrive right at the beginning of the barley harvest (v. 22). This is the first glimmer of hope, showing us that their return coincided with God coming to the aide of His people.
- In the beginning of chapter 2, we are told that Naomi had a relative on her husband’s side named Boaz. We are told he is a “prominent man of noble character” (v. 2:1).
- The author refers to Ruth as “Ruth the Moabitess” many times, reminding us that she is an outsider and that success would be unlikely for her in the land of Bethlehem. But God has a tender heart for the outcast that we see show up over and over in Old Testament law. (Lev. 19: 9-10, 23:22; Deut. 10:19, 24: 19-22)
- In Ruth’s willingness to work hard and provide for her mother-in-law, she “happened” (v.3) to glean in the field belonging to Boaz. This wording implies more than just a casual coincidence. From the start, as Boaz provides Ruth with provision & protection, we catch a glimpse of God’s heart for the vulnerable.

A scenic landscape featuring a stone building with a grey roof on the left, a path leading through a field of yellow flowers in the center, and a dense forest of green trees on the right. The text is overlaid on the image.

O4 KINSMAN- REDEEMER



Ruth 2:19-3:9



KINSMAN-REDEEMER

- The concept of a family redeemer comes from the Hebrew term *gō'ēl*, which means kinsman-redeemer. The *gō'ēl* was the near relative who was to ensure the economic well-being of a relative, and was especially instrumental when that person was incapable of getting himself or herself out of the crisis. (Lev. 25:25, Lev. 25:47-49, Deut. 25:5-10)
 - God in His wisdom wrote these instructions and provisions into His law to protect and preserve the weak. Ruth and Naomi had not been abandoned by the Lord!
- Naomi's instructions (vv.3-4):
 - Wash and put on perfume: be at your most attractive and presentable
 - Wear your best clothes: *šimlâ*=a new outer garment that covers the whole body
 - Go to the threshing floor: often linked to sexual activity, where prostitutes would offer services
 - Uncover his feet after he's done eating & drinking: a vulnerable and suggestive position where a lot could go wrong
- No matter how much doubt we have in Naomi's plan, it is clear that God wove it into His master plan for their lives.
- Ruth's proposal to Boaz was the only place where she veered away from Naomi's instructions- and many scholars believe she did this mainly for Naomi's benefit. (v. 9) (Ez. 16:8)



05 WAITING FORWARD

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Ruth 3:10-4:10

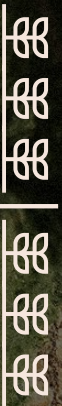


WAITING FORWARD

- Boaz responds by first referencing Ruth's reputation and "noble character" (v.11). In the Hebrew Bible, Proverbs came just before Ruth, so Proverbs 31 would have flowed right into the book of Ruth!
- Boaz wanted to redeem Ruth, but there was one problem, Naomi had a closer relative who would have the right to redeem them over Boaz (v.12). *We* will see that this issue does not surprise God, nor does it stop His will from being accomplished.
- Verse 18 is a scenario we are probably all familiar with one way or another... waiting. Naomi's words are key: "wait... for he won't rest unless he resolves this". They were able to trust the heart and abilities of Boaz, but we get to trust in the Almighty God while we wait! *We* can rest while we wait because we know He is always at work on our behalf.
- It is interesting to note that the other redeemer remains nameless, he is actually referred to by Boaz in the original language as "so and so". He made a decision trying to preserve his legacy, but is never referenced again in scripture. (v.6)
- When Boaz makes the public announcement to legally redeem Naomi's land, he announces that he has acquired Ruth by using her full name, title, and background (v.10). Our redeemer, Jesus, does the same thing for us. He does not pretend we don't have a past, He redeemed us while we were still sinners! (Rom. 5:8)



O6 LEAVING A LEGACY



Ruth 4:11-4:22



LEAVING A LEGACY

- In verses 11-12 of chapter 4, the witnesses speak a powerful blessing over Ruth and Boaz. In short, Rachel and Leah were the matriarchs of the house of Israel and Tamar was a foreigner who became the mother of Judah's most prominent clan - that of Perez.
- Verse 13 tells us that "the Lord granted conception" to Ruth. This is only the second time in the book of Ruth that the Lord is shown directly intervening. (Ruth 1:6b) We know that Ruth was married to Mahlon for ten years without children, so this verse implies that her pregnancy was a divine act of the Lord.
- Naomi could only think of one way for her predicament to be resolved back in chapter 1, but God is not limited by our ability to think of solutions. His plans will come to pass!
- There is also a blessing spoken by "the women" over Naomi in verses 14-15, although she seems like a less worthy character. This is a reminder that grace blesses those who don't deserve it. They name the child Obed, which means "one who serves" and we are told he will sustain Naomi in her old age (v. 15).
- We find out in verse 17 that Obed would become the father of Jesse and the grandfather of King David, which is the ultimate plot twist. Ruth's daily surrender led to a king, and also to the King of Kings! (Matthew 1:1-16)

THANKS

Do you have any questions?

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