

LOOK AT THE BOOK

RUTH

Ralph Porter
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AUTHOR

The author of the book is not identified. The emphasis on David and the author's knowledge of the details of the story makes an author contemporary with David likely.

DATE

If the author is a contemporary of David, the book was written about 1000 B.C. The events occurred during the period of the judges, about 1380 to 1050 B.C. The 12th century has been suggested, though it's impossible to identify with certainty.

BACKGROUND

Joshua has died. *The people have no strong national leader, so they are doing whatever they feel like doing.* They have turned from God and are experiencing severe oppression. To escape the effects of famine, Elimelech took his family to Moab. As things improved in Israel, Naomi and Ruth returned, hoping to find better opportunities.

Ruth was from Moab. The Moabites opposed God's people (Judg. 3). Their chief deity was appeased by human sacrifice which God had prohibited. Thus there was every reason for hatred between a Moabite and an Israelite. Yet, God dealt with this girl in love.

PURPOSE AND THEME

Ruth presents a dramatic contrast to the people of God. They ought to have recognized God's authority over them and obeyed His standards. Instead, they are out of control, each one doing whatever he feels like. The country is filled with idolatry and immoral perversion, even worse than that found among pagan nations. *Ruth puts them to shame. She comes from a pagan nation, but voluntarily accepts Yahweh as her God.* She identifies with His people and accepts His standards.

The story traces her submission to God's norms. It reaches a beautiful conclusion as Ruth marries Boaz. The climax is a surprise: *this Moabite woman was David's great grandmother* (4:17, 21). The main lesson of the book is that "God does not show favoritism but accepts men from every nation who fear Him and do what is right" (Acts 10:34).

Ruth's testimony, as a Moabite who recognized God's right to rule in her life, served as a testimony to convict Israel of their sin. God's dealing in her life reminds them that *God blesses His people for obedience.* The example of Boaz as a faithful kinsman-redeemer was also significant. He was obedient to God's standards and God blessed him. His example also serves as a type to demonstrate how Christ functioned as our Redeemer.

God's faithfulness, holiness and sovereignty are again demonstrated. He watches over His people and rewards those who are faithful to Him. He preserves a remnant of the faithful in every generation and circumstance.

ORGANIZATION

Ruth develops chronologically, around the major steps she took upon leaving her people and joining Naomi's family:

Background of the story 1:1-7

Ruth's decision to move to Israel 1:8-22

Gleaning to get food leads to meeting Boaz 2

Boaz's opportunity to function as kinsman-redeemer 3

Benefit as Boaz claims the estate and marries her 4:1-12

God's blessing on their lives and family 4:13-22

RUTH

“God doesn’t show favoritism!”

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RUTH’S COMMITMENT			RUTH’S COMPENSATION		
1-3			4		
Her Decision 1	Her Dedication 2	Her Submission 3	Her Wedding 4:1-20	Her Blessing 4:11-17	Her Posterity 4:18-21
Her motivation 1:1-7 Famine 1-2 Death 3-5 Separation 6-7 Her identification 1:8-22 Alternatives presented 8-13 Choice made 14-18 Orpah’s choice 14-15 Ruth’s choice 16-18 Women welcomed 19-22	Dedication demonstrated 2:1-7 Dedication rewarded 2:8-23 Needs provided 8-9 Loyalty praised 10-13 Kindness shown 14-16 Abundance gathered 17-18 Kinsman identified 19-23	Naomi’s instruction 3:1-5 Ruth’s presentation 3:6-9 Kinsman identified 3:10-18	First kinsman eliminated 4:1-8 Boaz motivated 4:9-10	Elders’ prayer 4:11-12 Naomi’s heir 4:13-17	