

RUTH

The Book of Ruth is a striking contrast to the Book of Judges, but its story is associated with the same period.

In Judges, national sin, violence, death, immorality and corruption portray a dark picture.

Ruth stands in contrasts to *Judges*.

Judges is about warfare, violence, and Israel's disobedience.

Ruth exemplifies peace, orderliness, and faithfulness.

Judges ended with rape, murder, warfare

-the concubine and the following civil war

But Ruth has a story book ending "they lived happily ever after"

Ch. 1- The move from Judah to Moab and back

A Jewish family (Elimelech and his wife Naomi) move from Bethlehem to Moab

-Elimelech dies and Naomi is left with two sons

-the sons marry Moabite women (Orpah and Ruth)

-then the sons die and Naomi is now left with only her two daughters-in-law

-Naomi decides to move back to her homeland of Judah

-she tells the two daughters-in-law to return to their mother's house

-Orpah goes but Ruth refuses and goes with Naomi to Judah

This is probably the most well known quote from the book of Ruth:

Rth 1:16 But Ruth said, "Do not urge me to leave you *or* turn back from following you; for where you go, I will go, and where you lodge, I will lodge. Your people *shall be* my people, and your God, my God.

Rth 1:17 "Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. Thus may the LORD do to me, and worse, if *anything but* death parts you and me."

-songs have even been written about it

Ch. 2- Ruth finds favor with Boaz

- Naomi has a kinsman named Boaz (related to her deceased husband)
 - Ruth decides to go glean in the fields for grain
 - much better welfare system then we have today
 - Levitical law states that the farmers cannot harvest the corners of their field
 - or pick up what gets dropped while harvesting
 - this is a hand up, not a hand out
 - still allows people their dignity by working for what they have
 - once people get used to getting something for nothing, there is little motivation to work again

- Ruth winds up in a field belonging to Boaz
- Boaz takes notice of her and says she should glean in his fields only
 - he provides water, protection and extra grain for her
 - commands his servants to leave extra grain on the ground
 - she asks why and he says

Rth 2:11 Boaz replied to her, "All that you have done for your mother-in-law after the death of your husband has been fully reported to me, and how you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and came to a people that you did not previously know.

Rth 2:12 "May the LORD reward your work, and your wages be full from the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to seek refuge."

- it is a real struggle to work hard and be committed to doing the right thing
 - we see people all around us who just go with the flow and seem to have it all
 - our culture says that to get ahead, it's ok to fudge a little on you taxes or benefits
 - it's normal to manipulate things in your business to make the numbers work so you come out on top
 - after all, it's just business and you have to look out for #1 right???

- God's rewards are different
 - even if the system today doesn't reward hard work and integrity like it once did, God notices

Ch. 3- Ruth proposes marriage to Boaz

- unlike our culture, Ruth actually proposes to Boaz
- comes to him by night and asks to spread his cloak over her
- he agrees but says there is a closer relative who has first rights

Ch. 4- Marriage and a new son

- Boaz finds the other relative the next morning
 - gives him the chance to redeem Naomi's land
 - at first, the other man wants the land
 - Boaz tells him that he would have to take Ruth and raise up kids for her as part of the deal
 - he saysnever mind, that would complicate my inheritance...you take it
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- Boaz and Ruth get married
 - have a son
 - the son's name is Obed who will later have a son named Jesse
 - who will have a son named David
 - King David the Giant slayer
 - King David through who's lineage 28 generations later is born the Messiah, Jesus Christ
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- if ever there was a story that should end with "and they lived happily ever after"... this is it
 - you've probably seen the plaques in people's homes that say "All because two people fell in Love"
 - well that's a good summary for this book.
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- Every decision we make has consequences
 - Ruth's decision to stay loyal to her mother in law changed to course of human history

Jesus types:

-when Ruth came to Boaz at night:

Rth 3:9 He said, "Who are you?" And she answered, "I am Ruth your maid. So spread your covering over your maid, for you are a close relative." (lit. a redeemer)

-In order to be qualified to redeem someone you had to meet strict guide lines mentioned in Deuteronomy and Leviticus

-had to be relative of those you redeem

-be able to pay the price of redemption

-had to be willing to redeem the one who was claimed by another

-the redeemer had to be free and not in debt himself

-Boaz is for Ruth what Jesus is for the human race

-the Kinsman Redeemer