

Ruth - Why Does God Want Us to Know This History?

1. Study Ruth 1:1-22. What is the background to Naomi?

2. Read Ruth 1:14 - 2:23. Who is Ruth and what makes her distinctive to the Jewish community in Bethlehem?

3. The narrative touches upon three Jewish laws that originated from the Mosaic Law: The Law of Sowing and Reaping (Lev 23:22; Deut 24:19-22), Redemption of Land (Lev 25:23-28), and Levirate Marriage (Deut 25:5-10). Discuss how these laws apply to Naomi, Ruth and Boaz.

The Law of Sowing and Reaping (Lev 23:22; Deut 24:19-22)

As a reminder of their former status as a slave in Egypt, Mosaic legislation required that landowners reap their land with only one pass. What remained was to be made available for widows and destitute to glean.

The Law of Redemption of Land (Lev 25:23-28)

While Moses spoke the words in Leviticus during the wanderings of the Israelites, God intended the nation of Israel to understand that the Promised Land was the property of God's. God's gift of the use of the Land was established by the Abrahamic Covenant (Gen 15:7; 17:8; 24:7; Ex 6:4). The land granted to the various tribes was intended to remain under their stewardship; thus, genealogies were essential for maintaining their property rights.

If a Hebrew sold his land, he was merely selling a lease and intended to eventually get the land back. Mosaic legislation established the process by which a male Hebrew can get the land back: 1) the male Hebrew can redeem the land and determine its cost according to the prescribed formula, 2) the nearest male relative (kinsman) could redeem the land or 3) the Hebrew could wait until the Year of Jubilee when the ownership rights are restored.

The Law of Levirate (Latin for "brother-in-law") Marriage (Deut 25:5-10)

Under certain circumstances, a brother-in-law marriage to a widowed or divorced sister-in-law is allowed. The fulfillment of this law was initiated by the widowed sister-in-law and intended to provide a male heir for the deceased's family property and care for the mother in her old age.

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4. How did Ruth make her marriage proposal? Study Ruth 3:1-18. Consult a manners and customs reference source.

5. Read Ruth 4:1-12. There were two objects that required redeeming: 1) Naomi's land (Law of Redemption of Land) and 2) taking Naomi's daughter-in-law Ruth as a wife (Law of Levirate). Why was Boaz considered the kinsman redeemer? What was the monetary price paid by Boaz?

6. Occurring during the period of Judges, the Book of Ruth is significant within the context of its neighboring books Judges and 1 Samuel. Did you observe a contrast between the behavior of Ruth and the nation of Israel in Judges?

7. Was Rahab or Ruth genetically from the patriarch Jacob? Was Boaz an Israelite? How can Jesus Christ be figuratively seen as the kinsman redeemer?

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Notes for the Bible study leader.

The book of Judges depicts the nation of Israel as having several cyclical periods of spiritual decline with occasional revival. At its end, the nation is corrupt and is in moral and social anarchy. "In those days there was no king in Israel; everyone did what was right in their own eyes (Jdg 21:25).

In stark contrast, the book of Ruth was the highest example of responsible living: faithful obedience to God and gracious acts towards others. In establishing that Ruth was the great grandmother of David, the book of Ruth serves as a prologue into 1 Samuel by affirming King David's rights to the throne of Israel.

The neighbor women said, "A son has been born to Naomi," and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David. (Ruth 4:17, CSB)

1) The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham:

2) Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, and Jacob fathered Judah and his brothers. 3) Judah fathered Perez and Zerah by Tamar, Perez fathered Hezron, and Hezron fathered Ram. 4) Ram fathered Amminadab, Amminadab fathered Nahshon, and Nahshon fathered Salmon. 5) Salmon fathered **Boaz** by **Rahab**, Boaz fathered Obed by **Ruth**, and Obed fathered Jesse. 6) Jesse fathered David the king.

David fathered Solomon by her *who had been the wife* of Uriah. 7) Solomon fathered Rehoboam, Rehoboam fathered Abijah, and Abijah fathered Asa. 8) Asa fathered Jehoshaphat, Jehoshaphat fathered Joram, and Joram fathered Uzziah. 9) Uzziah fathered Jotham, Jotham fathered Ahaz, and Ahaz fathered Hezekiah. 10) Hezekiah fathered Manasseh, Manasseh fathered Amon, and Amon fathered Josiah. 11) Josiah fathered Jeconiah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

12) After the deportation to Babylon: Jeconiah fathered Shealtiel, and Shealtiel fathered Zerubbabel. 13) Zerubbabel fathered Abihud, Abihud fathered Eliakim, and Eliakim fathered Azor. 14) Azor fathered Zadok, Zadok fathered Achim, and Achim fathered Eliud. 15) Eliud fathered Eleazar, Eleazar fathered Matthan, and Matthan fathered Jacob. 16) Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, by whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah. (Matt 1:1-16, NASB)

The story of Ruth is seen as an Old Testament illustration of Jesus Christ's work of atonement. However a distinction should be made; the story of Ruth illustrates a *subjective* aspect of atonement, because it is directed towards Believers and how they are redeemed or freed from slavery.

The Moabite Ruth is seen as figuratively representing the New Testament Gentile. The nearest kinsman redeemer is seen as figuratively representing the Mosaic Law; but, because the Law could not redeem the penalty for the sins of human beings, Jesus Christ is the next kinsman in line who could redeem. Boaz is seen as figuratively representing Jesus Christ the kinsman redeemer "gō'ēl" who frees Ruth from bondage.

1. Because He was born a human being, Jesus was a blood relative.
2. Because of His sinless state, Jesus was capable of purchasing and redeeming the penalty for the sins of man.
3. Because of His obedience, Jesus came willing to be the "gō'ēl".
4. Because of His crucifixion, Jesus completed the atonement and provided the means for the salvation of Believers.