

My Kinsman Redeemer

Love story of redemption

A Study in the Book of Ruth

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Ruth was written during the time period of the Judges, sometime between 1160 and 1100 BC. It is one of only two books in the Bible named after a woman, the other being the Book of Esther. It is also one of the Old Testament books belonging to the third section of the biblical canon, known as the **Ketuvim**, or **Writings**. In the Hebrew Bible, it is one of five Old Testament books that together make up what is called the **Megillot**, five scrolls that are read at prescribed times during Jewish religious festivals. The other four books that are a part of the Megillot are Song of Solomon, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, and Esther, each read at different times during Jewish feast days. The Book of Ruth is read annually during the feast of Pentecost.

The word “Pentecost” means “fifty” and the feast occurs fifty days after the Feast of the First Fruits, which was one of the feasts celebrated during the week of Passover. The Feast of Pentecost is also known as the Feast of Weeks because it comes seven full weeks after the Feast of First Fruits. It is a celebration of the early wheat harvest around the end of May or early June. This is noteworthy because it is just prior to this feast that Ruth finds her way into the field of Boaz to glean.

This time period, when Israel was ruled by judges, was a time of great moral decline and a time of spiritual darkness and suffering, brought about by Israel’s apostasy and rebellion against God. Part of the judgements God brought upon His sinful people included famine and war, and this historical account begins with a Jewish couple fleeing their home in Bethlehem, along with their two sons, in the midst of a great famine in the land. The land they flee to is to the neighboring land of Moab, to the southeast.

There are so many important themes throughout this book that speak to our hearts. The Book of Ruth has not only historical significance, but great spiritual significance for us as well. In the midst of such great spiritual darkness, the Book of Ruth is a bright light that encourages us that **God still has His plans, His purposes and His people**; those who serve Him with a sincere heart, even in the darkest of times. We see His provision, even in the leanest of times. We see His providence, even in times when we see no way out of our situation. It shows us the truth of Romans 8:28 in action, that God surely does work all things together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose. It also confirms to us God's plan in reaching out to all of humanity, not only to Israel, His chosen people. We see the heart of God in making this young Moabite woman a part of the lineage of Christ, along with Rahab, a Canaanite harlot. And of course, most important is the picture we see in this love story between Ruth and Boaz, of **Christ**, our true **Kinsman Redeemer**.

The book not only has great spiritual significance to us, but great application. This quote by Chuck Swindoll says it well:

“The book of Ruth came along at a time of irresponsible living in Israel’s history and appropriately called the people back to a greater responsibility and faithfulness before God—even in difficult times. This call applies just as clearly to us today.

We belong to a loving, faithful, and powerful God who has never failed to care and provide for His children. Like Ruth and Boaz, we are called to respond to that divine grace in faithful obedience, in spite of the godless culture in which we live. Are you willing?”

We are delighted that you are joining us for this study. We pray that the Lord will encourage your hearts, strengthen your faith and renew your trust in His plans and purposes for your life, as you feel the protective covering of His love over you, as *your* Kinsman Redeemer.

Shawn & Cathy