



DAILY
B I B L E G U I D E

The Book of Ruth

Day 87 of a Yearly Bible Reading Program

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Daily Bible Reading Plan

Day	Passage	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Day 87	Ruth 1-4	<input type="checkbox"/>

Welcome to the Book of Ruth!

The Book of Ruth is a remarkable and very personal story of how God's Providential grace brought a Moabite girl into the lineage of David and of Christ. It takes place in the time of the Judges, probably between Judges chapter 3 and 4, when Moab had been defeated by Israel. It is a remarkable contrast to Judges, being full of hope and love in some of the darkest times for Israel.

A few quick facts about Ruth:

- Tradition says it was written by Samuel.
- It covers a period of roughly 1309-1299 B.C.
- The key verses are Ruth's declaration of faith in 1:16-17.
- A simple outline:
 - Ruth's Origin – Chapter 1
 - Ruth's Service – Chapter 2
 - Ruth's Rest – Chapter 3
 - Ruth's Reward – Chapter 4.

Chapter 1 Notes

In this chapter we meet Ruth who chooses to accompany her mother-in-law to Israel and serve God.

vs. 1-5 – During a time of famine, a Jewish man from Bethlehem (“house of bread”, also called Ephratah, meaning “fruitful”) in Judah forsook the Promised Land and sought refuge among the Canaanites of Moab. I think the names in Ruth are very important to note. The man’s name is Elimelech (“my God is king”) and his wife is Naomi (“my delight”). Their two sons are Mahlon (“sickly”) and Chilion (“pining one”). While in Moab the sons take Moabite wives, Orpah (“gazelle”) and Ruth (“friend”). The three men die in Moab, leaving three widows to find their own way.

vs. 6-13 – Naomi decides it is time to head back to Bethlehem as reports come that the famine has lifted. She releases her daughters-in-law from any obligation to follow her. Orpah chooses to stay among her own people.

vs. 14-18 – Ruth refuses to leave Naomi, choosing to leave her people and their religion and embrace the Jews and their God.

vs. 19-22 – The two women arrive at Bethlehem at the time of the barley harvest. This was after Passover and in our modern month of April. Naomi asks that she now be called Mara (“bitter”) to reflect how low her state had become.

Chapter 2 Notes

In this chapter God brings Ruth under the attention and care of Boaz.

vs. 1-3 – We meet the near kinsmen of Naomi named Boaz (“strength in him” or perhaps “swiftness”). He has a barley field near Bethlehem that is being harvested. The custom of this time is that the reapers were to not thoroughly harvest the field but leave the edges and places they missed for the poor to glean from. Ruth goes out to do just this, and God guides her to this particular field.

vs. 4-17 – Boaz takes note of Ruth and learns who she is. He goes beyond any obligation of charity for the poor in providing by allowing her to work and even eat among his servants. At the end of the day, she has gleaned 1 ephah, which is to us about 5 dry gallons or 6/10 of a bushel.

vs. 18-23 – Naomi is amazed at the amount of grain that Ruth returns with. She learns that is was because Ruth had providentially happened onto Boaz’s field and he had especially gracious to her. Ruth continues gleaning in the Boaz’s fields through the barley and wheat harvests (wheat is harvested around Pentecost, our modern month of May).

Chapter 3 Notes

In this chapter Ruth invokes Boaz to perform the duty of the kinsmen.

vs. 1-7 – Naomi instructs Ruth on how to approach Boaz to be the kinsmen redeemer of their family by marrying Ruth and producing an heir to continue the family line. This is called a levirate marriage and is part of the Law in Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Ruth dresses her best and approaches Boaz as he sleeps (covering one's feet is an idiom for sleeping).

vs. 8-13 – Ruth asks Boaz to “spread thy skirt” over her, which is an idiom for marriage (see Deuteronomy 22:30, 27:20; Ezekial 16:8.) Boaz admits his willingness to do so, but there is another that is more closely related and would be the first person on whom the responsibility would fall.

vs. 14-18 – Ruth returns home with a gift of more grain from Boaz and the promise that he would act on their behalf.

Chapter 4 Notes

In this chapter we see Boaz marry Ruth and produce an heir, thus continuing the line which would soon produce David and later Christ.

vs. 1-5 – Boaz intercepts the nearer kinsmen and presses him to fulfill his duty to Naomi and Ruth.

vs. 6-8 – The nearer kinsman is not able or willing to do so, though the exact reason is not given. To refuse to perform this duty was shameful (see Deuteronomy 25:9-10), but in this case God is working through this man's decision. This is likely why no details are given about them. He forfeits his rights and allows Boaz to act.

vs. 9-12 – Boaz performs the legal actions to redeem the property of Naomi's family and also to take Ruth as wife to raise up a new heir. The people respond with joy and pronounce a blessing on the marriage.

vs. 14-17 – Boaz and Ruth have a son, who Naomi raises. The child is named Obed ("serving"). Obed's son would be Jesse ("wealthy") and his grandson king David ("beloved")

vs. 18-22 – This brief genealogy links Judah's son Pharez (see Genesis 38) to David.

Devotional Thoughts for Day 87

Many people see the Book of Ruth as a grand love story between Boaz and Ruth. I think we may misread it to come to that conclusion. Reese's Chronological Bible has Boaz at 122 years old and Ruth at 30. While love and marriage are wonderful and noble things, the greatest lesson of this book is God's gracious interaction with mankind. It is Romans 8:28 in action, with the bonus that it affects the royal Messianic lineage of Christ.

Hymn for Day 87

Our hymn today is "People of the Living God" by James Montgomery. It believed to have been written in 1814 when reuniting the Moravians at Fulneck, England. It wonderfully echoes the sentiments of Ruth in 1:16-17.

*People of the living God,
I have sought the world around;
Paths of sin and sorrow trod,
Peace and comfort nowhere found:
Now to you my spirit turns—
Turns a fugitive unblest;
Brethren, where your altar burns,
Oh, receive me into rest.*

*Lonely I no longer roam
Like the cloud, the wind, the wave;
Where you dwell shall be my home,
Where you die shall be my grave;
Mine the God whom you adore;
Your Redeemer shall be mine;
Earth can fill my soul no more—
Every idol I resign.*

*Tell me not of gain and loss,
Ease, enjoyment, pomp, and pow'r;
Welcome poverty and cross,
Shame reproach, affliction's hour.
Follow Me—I know Thy voice;
Jesus, Lord, Thy steps I see;
Now I take Thy yoke by choice,
Light Thy burden now to me.*