

THE BOOK OF RUTH – INTRODUCTION

I. TITLE OF BOOK:

- A. “Ruth” – may be a Moabite modification of the Hebrew, “reeiut” meaning “friendship, association”.
- B. Ruth, the principle character of the Book, lives up to her name admirably (Ruth 1:16).

II. PLACE OF BOOK IN THE HEBREW CANON AND OUR BIBLE

- A. The third division: Kethubhim or Hagiographa (“Writings”) cf. Luke 24:44.
 - 1. First division: “The Torah” (Law) – Genesis – Deuteronomy
 - 2. Second division: The Nebhiim (Prophets)
 - a. “Former Prophets” – Joshua, Judges, I & 2 Samuel, I & 2 Kings
 - b. “Latter Prophets ” – Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and the 12 minor Prophets
 - 3. Third division (Writings) – Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Song of Solomon, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, I & 2 Chronicles.
- B. Properly fits next to Judges in our Bibles:
 - 1. “...in the days when the judges judged” (Ruth 1:1)

III. DATE AND AUTHOR OF BOOK

- A. Time of the Judges (Ruth 1:1)
 - 1. Famine (cf. Judges 6:4)
 - 2. Ehud and Moabites (Judges 3:12-30)
 - 3. Gideon and Midianites (cf. Judges 7-8)
 - 4. Ehud – Gideon (1316 B.C. – 1151 B.C.)
- B. Written at the earliest in the time of David
 - 1. Ancient custom has to be explained to readers (Ruth 4:7)
 - 2. David is mentioned (Ruth 4:17,22)
- C. Author unknown – Some say Samuel wrote it.

IV. JEWISH CUSTOMS IN BOOK

- A. Law of “gleaning” the fields – blessing to the poor (Ruth 1:21, 2:2, Lev. 19:9-10, 23:22, Deut. 24:19-21)
- B. Law of the “near kinsman” – “goel” (Ruth 2:20, 3:9, 12, 4:7-8, Deut. 25:5-10)

V. FEATURES OF THE BOOK

- A. Historical account of some of the days of Moabite Ruth who is in the lineage of David’s genealogy and ultimately Jesus’ (Ruth 4:17-22, Matt. 1:5).

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- B. How true friendship, godliness and kindness can thrive in the difficult and sometimes dark times of the Judges
 - 1. Ruth with Naomi (Ruth 1:16)
 - 2. Boaz with his reapers (Ruth 2:4)
 - 3. Boaz with Ruth (2:8-9, 3:17, 4:10)
- C. Contrast of the two books in the Bible named after Women:
 - 1. Esther: a woman (Jew) marries a man - King (Gentile)
 - 2. Ruth: a woman (Gentile) marries a man – prosperous land owner (Jew).

VI. OUTLINE OF THE BOOK:

- A. Sojourn of Elimelech's family in Moab (1:1-5)
- B. Naomi's return with Ruth to Bethlehem (1:6-22)
- C. Ruth gleanes in the field of Boaz (2:1-23)
- D. Ruth appeals to Boaz to perform his part as the nearest kinsman (3:1-18)
- E. The council at the gate of Bethlehem (4:1-12)
- F. Marriage of Boaz and Ruth – Birth of Obed (4:13-17)
- G. Genealogy of David (4:18-22)