

God's Redeeming Love - The Book of Ruth – study 1

The Structure of Ruth

Study 1a	1:1-5	Overture	Setting the scene
Study 2	1:6-22	Act 1	In the Land of Moab - 'The Emptying of Naomi' - the line of the 'seed' is threatened
Study 3	2:1-23	Act 2	In the Field of Bethlehem - 'Ruth's first encounter with Boaz' - a ray of hope for the seed's restoration
Study 4	3:1-18	Act 3	At the Threshing Floor' - 'Ruth's second encounter with Boaz' - a complication in the seed's restoration
Study 5	4:1-17	Act 4	In the Town of Bethlehem - 'The Refilling of Naomi' - the seed is secured
Study 1b	4:18-22	Conclusion	The genealogy of the Kingly line

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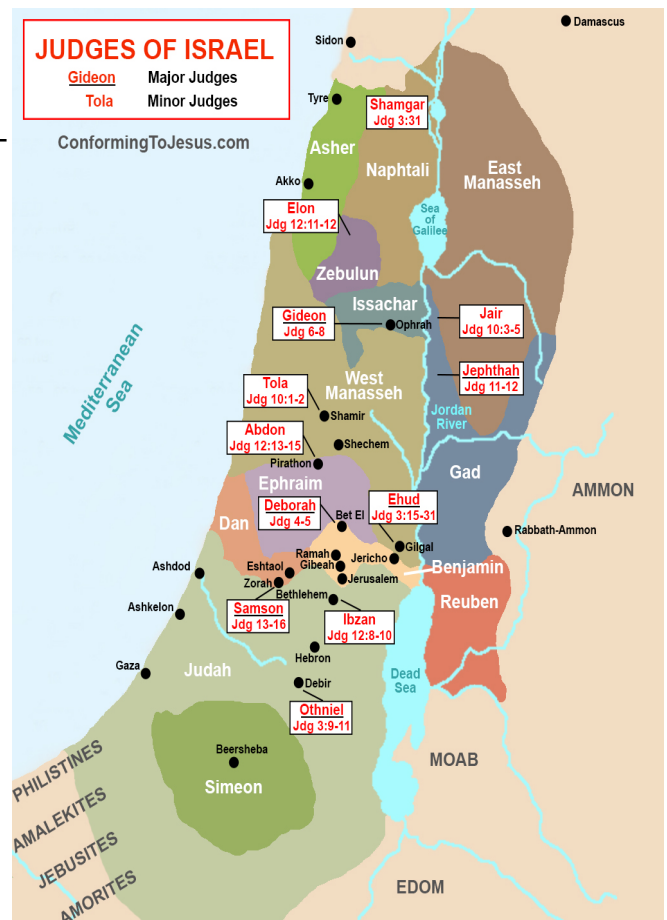
1. Introduction to Ruth (1:1-5 & 4:18-25)

'In the days when the Judges ruled...'

- Where does Ruth fit in the storyline? (Ruth 4:18-20)
- Salmon & Rahab (Matthew 1:5, Hebrews 11:31, Joshua 6:25)
- Eglon and Ehud (Judges 3:12-30).

The scene that's being set:

- The famine (1:1)
- Not mere climate change
- The wicked are prospering, while God's people are languishing.



¹ Structure taken from Daniel I. Block (2025) *Ruth*, in the *Exegetical Commentary on the Old Testament* (Zondervan)

- The justice of God on such wicked men - wallowing in his own faeces.
- A portrait of a king of the nations - is *this* what you want, Israel??

‘Why would Elimelech decide to go to Moab?’

- ‘Megolit Ruth,’ or ‘Megolit Naomi’?
- “The book begins with Naomi being emptied, and concludes with her being filled.”²

The Ruth’s connections with other books and the historical life of Israel:³

Its places in different Old Testament collections:

1. One of five *megilot* read (later) at five annual festivals:

Passover	Song of Songs
Pentecost (Shavuoth)	Ruth
Tish B’Av	Lamentations
Tabernacles	Ecclesiastes
Purim	Esther

2. First in the ‘Hagiographs’ (Writings see Luke 24:44),

- Before Psalms. (Esp. 1 & 2)

3. After Proverbs and before Ecclesiastes.

- Between Solomonic writings
- Following Proverbs 31

² *ibid*

³ Many of these points are also drawn from Daniel I. Block’s commentary on *Ruth*.

- The three characters Naomi, Ruth, Boaz exemplify a righteous observance of Mosaic laws (Leviticus 19:9-10, Deuteronomy 24:19, Deuteronomy 25:5-10, Leviticus 15:25-28, 47-55)
- But, a breaking of the Law? (Deuteronomy 7:1-5 and Deuteronomy 23:3-6)
- Yet, Deuteronomy 10:18-19
- The law of love: 'Mercy triumphs over judgement' (James 2:13).

4. Between Judges and Samuel (Modern Bibles)

- A link between the 'chaotic' time of the Judges, and the unfolding order of Samuel-Kings (1 Samuel 8).

Other significant links within the Old Testament

1. Micah 5:1-5a

- Quoted in Matthew 2:5-6
- 'Ephrathites from Bethlehem in Judah.'

2. Job.

- 'more than 7 sons' (Ruth 4:15, cf. Job 1:2).
- 'more beautiful than any other women' (Job 42:13-15)

The mention and placing of names in Ruth.

- *Bethlehem*: 'house of bread'
- *of Judah*: (Genesis 49:8-12)
- *Moab*: (Genesis 19:30-38)
- *Elimelech*: 'God is King' & *Naomi*: 'Pleasant.'

- *Mahlon*: 'sick' & *Chilion*: 'destruction.' (see Hosea 1:3-8)
- *Orpah*: 'neck/turning'
- *Ruth*: 'friend/companion'

Be wary of...

- ...The allegorical approach⁴
- ...Imposing our frameworks⁵ on the scriptures.

The genealogy (4:18-22)

- A family history of failure to observe the Levirate marriage laws (Genesis 38:1-30)
- Judah echoing Lot and his daughters (See Genesis 19:30-38, Leviticus 18:15, 20:12)
- 'Will this iniquity be visited on the children's children to the 3rd and 4th generation?' (Exodus 34:7), or will 'generational sin' be broken by the action of a righteous man?
- The circumstances of Perez's birth (Genesis 38:27-30) - a Jacob-like figure
- The promise comes not according to the flesh, but the promise (Galatians 4:22-23)
 - Significant for us: Galatians 4:28
- The 'breach' in the Chronicler's genealogy (1 Chronicles 2:5-10)

The story of Ruth isn't just about a widow brought into a family, but about the redemption of a whole family line beginning with a man who fathered a child by an unlawful union, continuing with rival sons, bloodlines culminating in traitors, and apostate families; all in preparation for the inauguration of a royal line that will eventually give birth to the Messiah.

⁴ Unlike M.R. DeHaan, *The Romance of Redemption: Studies in the Book of Ruth* (Kregel, 1996)

⁵ Such as Dispensationalism, which makes a distinction between Israel and the Church as two distinct peoples of God.