

Through the Bible Book by Book

Old Testament

by Myer Pearlman

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Ruth

Theme: Judges gave us a very dark picture of Israel as seen from the national viewpoint; Ruth gives us a bright picture of that period as seen in the faithfulness and in the beauty of character of certain individuals.

The story is one of the most beautiful in the Bible, and is doubly interesting from the fact that its heroine is a Gentile. The very last word in the book - David - will reveal its chief value. Its purpose is to trace the descent of David, the progenitor of the Messiah. The whole book has its climax in the genealogy found in the last chapter.

Author: Jewish tradition assigns the authorship to Samuel.

Scope: The book covers a period of ten years probably during the time of Gideon.

CONTENTS

We shall use the outline given by Dr. Scofield.

- I. Ruth Deciding (1).
- II. Ruth Serving (2).
- III. Ruth Resting (3).
- IV. Ruth Rewarded (4).

I. Ruth Deciding (1)

When did the events recorded in this book take place (1:1)?

Ought there to have been a famine at this time (Deuteronomy 28:1-14)?

If Elimelech had trusted GOD would he have gone to Moab (Psalm 37:3)?

What happened to the family in Moab (verses 3,4)?

What was Ruth's decision (verses 16,17)?

II. Ruth Serving (2)

Chapter 2:3 says that Ruth happened to light on a field belonging to Boaz, a kinsman of Elimelech. Subsequent events will show that this happening was divinely ordained. Notice Boaz' prophetic blessing of Ruth (2:12).

III. Ruth Resting (3)

This chapter calls for an explanation of some Jewish laws and customs. Elimelech, through poverty, had lost his property. According to Jewish law, the property could be redeemed by a kinsman of the former owner (Leviticus 25:25). Boaz, as a kinsman of Elimelech had this right. Another law required that if a man died childless, his brother should marry the widow (Deuteronomy 25:5-10). It seems, however, that custom had decided, in the course of time, that in the absence of a brother-in-law, the duty should devolve on the nearest kinsman. Naomi, since she was the widow of Elimelech, and since she had no children, had a claim on Boaz. This claim she gave over to Ruth.

Ruth is sent to Boaz, and by the symbolic act of lying at his feet, reminded him of the duty owed to his deceased kinsman (3:7-9). Boaz, though willing to marry Ruth, reminded her that there was a nearer relative than he, who would have first claim.

IV. Ruth Rewarded (4)

The next morning Boaz takes witnesses and offers the right of the redemption of Naomi's property to his kinsman, at the same time reminding him that if he bought the property, he would have to marry Ruth. This he refuses to do leaving Boaz free to marry Ruth.

Chapter 4:18,22 though seemingly an uninteresting list of names, is the climax to which the book leads, for it reveals the purpose of its writing - to show the descent of David, the progenitor of the Messiah (cf. Matthew 1:3-6).

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