

Bible Challenge 2018

Week 9b: February 25-March 3

Outline

Ruth 1:1-5: Introduction to the Book

Ruth 1:6-22: Death and a Return home from Moab during the Barley Harvest

Ruth 2-3: Ruth and Boaz

Ruth 4:1-17: Boaz the Kinsman Redeemer

Ruth 4:18-22: The Lineage of Two Kings

Ruth is a sign of beauty in and during a very ugly era in the history of Israel. The world has essentially fallen apart and idolatry has filled the land, yet in the midst of that, God still preserves a righteous remnant for himself. In this case, through a man named Boaz. What makes Boaz so significant is that he is the son of Rahab the Prostitute who rejected her people to follow the God of Israel (see Matthew 1:5).

There is another aspect of the book of Ruth that is very important, and that is as the book of Ruth is meant to illustrate the Hebrew practice of Levirate Marriage. This can be found in Genesis 38 as well as in Deuteronomy 25:9-10. The premise of this principle is based on the idea that land is an eternal family inheritance from God. And thus, if a man died with no heirs to whom to give the land, a son must be raised up by the family on behalf of the deceased.

The way this works is that if a man dies without having children, his brother would take on the responsibility not only of taking care of his widow, but of marrying her as a kind of second wife (or perhaps a first wife). The first child that they had together would be counted as having been the child of the deceased brother. Future children would be their own. That sounds a little strange to our western ears, but it was the way in which the land could be preserved in the family name and that the brother who died would have descendants on the land for generations to come.

Introduction, Death, and a Return Home

The setting of this book is simple. At some point, during the era of the Judges, a man named Elkanah and his wife, Naomi, moved from their ancestral lands to the land of Moab due to a famine. In some ways, one can hear echoes of the story of Jacob in the account, but in this case, it brings about devastating consequences. The man and his two sons die, leaving behind three widows with no children to care for them.

Given the context, the implication is that these deaths are a sign of God's judgment for abandoning the land of Israel. Famines themselves were often a means that God used to draw the people back to himself, repenting of their idolatry, and so with repentance, there is a sense that God would have made provision for him. At the same time, this is a reminder of how God uses even the sinful decisions made by men for His purposes.

And so, as an old widow, Naomi dismisses her two Moabite daughter-in-laws and prepares to return home. Ruth, though, chooses to forsake her people and the gods of her people and to cling to Naomi and to her God. This is the mark of God's hand in her life. Naomi and Ruth then return home and we are told that they arrive at the time of the Barley harvest — a reminder that the famine has now lifted on the land.

Ruth and Boaz

On the surface, this is a love story and the story of a man of faith with immense integrity. But the story is more than that. It is a reminder of God's provision for his people. While it is by no means an allegory, Boaz' care for Ruth (for whom he was under no obligation, she was a Moabite) is a reminder of Christ's care for his church (again, he was under no obligation to redeem us — it was an act of grace. Boaz was Ruth's provider, advocate, and protector during the period of time she came to the threshing floor.

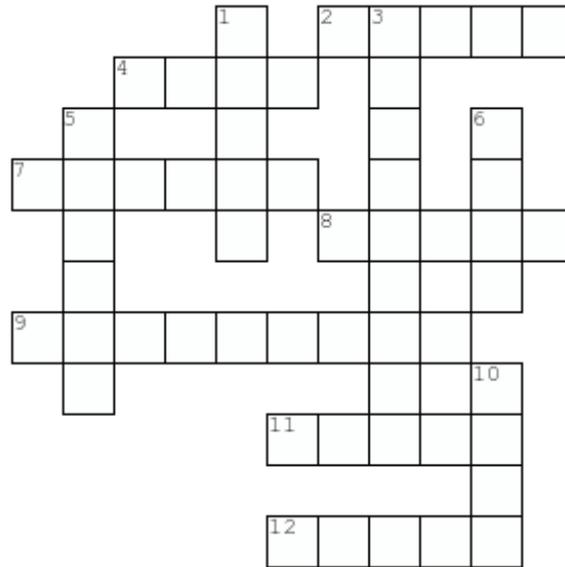
Kinsman Redeemer

Boaz engages with his relative before the city Elders. The relative refuses to take on the obligation of the Kinsman Redeemer, in Hebrew: "Goel." And so, it passes to Boaz and he accepts. There is the matter of a sandal (probably a connection to Deuteronomy 25:9-10) and then they marry.

Lineage of Two Kings

Not only does God bless the marriage of Boaz and Ruth with children, the child, Obed becomes the father of Jesse and the grandfather of King David. This brings not only Rahab into the line of Christ, but Ruth as well. And then, not just the lineage of King David, but the greater King David — King Jesus — descends from this line.

Week 9B: Ruth



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Across

2. This greater king will descend from Boaz and Ruth.
4. Naomi changed her name to this because of her troubles.
7. This item was transacted when the relative gave Boaz the right to redeem Ruth and Naomi.
8. Boaz descends from this son of Jacob.
9. Naomi and her family left this city for Moab.
11. The name of Boaz' mother.
12. This king descends from Boaz and Ruth.

Down

1. The name of Ruth's Moabite sister-in-law.
3. Naomi's husband.
5. Naomi and Ruth returned to Israel during this harvest.
6. The Hebrew word for a 'Kinsman Redeemer.'
10. The name of Ruth and Boaz' son.