

Chapter-By-Chapter Bible Studies

Ruth

“Beauty for Ashes”



Bible Studies
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Ruth

"Beauty for Ashes"

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Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Ruth Chapter 1 - Questions

Memory verse for this study:

"... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

Discussion Questions for Chapter 1 (read the verses, then try to answer the question):

1. (:1&2) When is this happening? Where is it happening? Who is it happening to? What is the story?

2. (:3-5) What happened to this family when they got to Moab?
- ❑ Were they being punished by God?
 - ❑ Was it wrong of them to have moved there in the first place?
 - ❑ Was it wrong of the sons to have married Moabite women?

It was forbidden for Jews to inter-marry with idol-worshippers:

Deuteronomy 23:3-6

Isaiah 52:11

II Corinthians 6:14-18

But there were exceptions. What about Rahab?

Wasn't she

a non-Jew who was welcomed into the Jewish nation?

Matt 1:5,

Heb. 11:31

Joshua 6:24, 25)

- ❑ If they weren't being punished by God....why was all this happening to them?

3. (:6-7) Why did Naomi and her daughters-in-law start back to Israel?

4. (:8-13) Why did Naomi tell each of her daughters-in-law to go back to their family homes?

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5. (:13) What word in verse 13 gives you a clue to the state of Naomi's heart and mind?
 - What is "bitterness"? Is it a sin? Is it preventable? Is it curable?
6. (:14-18) Why did Orpah go? Why did Ruth stay?
7. (:19-22) What clues do you see which indicate things are not as dark as Naomi thinks?
 - Why couldn't Naomi see them?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

8. When tragedy comes into your life, how can you tell it is God telling you that you have done something wrong? (James 5:13-16)
9. How can you remove bitterness from your life? (Ephesians 4:31&32)
10. Is it possible you think things are worse than they really are? What clues could you look for to tell you how things really are?
11. Why do bad things happen to good people?



Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Ruth Chapter 1 - Discussion Notes

Memory verse for this study:

"... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

Discussion Questions for Chapter 1 (read the verses, then try to answer the question):

1. (:1&2) When is this happening? Where is it happening? Who is it happening to? What is the story?

Verse 1 gives us an awful lot of information. We find out that this story is taking place "in the time the judges ruled." It is happening at a time in Israel's history after the days of Joshua, who led the nation in conquering the land of Israel. And before the days of the Kings. This was a time when lawlessness was widespread, leadership was practically non-existent, and the Jewish people were in a terrible state. Judges 21:25 describes it best: "In those days Israel had no king; everyone did as he saw fit." Every man was a law unto himself. If it feels good...do it!

We see that the story begins with a Jewish family living in Bethlehem, Israel. That tells that this little family was from the tribe of Judah – the future king of Israel was promised to come from the tribe of Judah – and Bethlehem was the central city for the tribe of Judah.

A man and his wife and their two sons lived in Bethlehem, but moved to the neighboring country of Moab when they ran short of food because of a famine. This was not an unusual custom for those days. A man had to feed his family. They probably always intended to return to Bethlehem once the famine was over.

The people of Moab were not Jews. They were Gentiles...and they were idol-worshippers, but at this time they lived in peace with the Jews.

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Here's an interesting little tidbit: the names of the people in this family seem to be significant:

Elimilech means "my God is King"

Naomi means "pleasant and lovely"

Mahlon means "puny"

Kilion means "pining"

Their names almost tell us their story. Elimilech and Naomi started out their life together full of joy and praise for God...but soon they had two sons who weren't exactly the picture of health...and then a famine...and then things got worse....

2. (:3-5) What happened to this family when they got to Moab?

We are not told how long they lived in Moab before life got harder, but at some point Elimilech died, and Naomi was left with two sons to raise by herself. The life of a single mom was, of course, much harder then than it is now, but at least she did have her boys. They would be her ticket to the future. They would turn around and take care of her some day. They would move her back to her home in Bethlehem. They would bring sons into the world who would also be a hope and a future for her.

But ten years later the family is still in Moab. The sons have married two Moabite women...no children yet. And then the unthinkable happens – the two sons die. And three widows are left to stare across an empty table at each other every morning, wondering...what will become of us?

Society wasn't exactly friendly to unmarried women...especially those without children. There just simply wasn't a future for women without someone to support and protect them.

❑ Were they being punished by God?

Everything had gone wrong. Was God mad at them? Why would He be mad at them?

❑ Was it wrong of them to have moved there in the first place?

After all, the Lord God had told the Jewish people to inhabit the land of Israel. He hadn't told them to run to a safer place when things got bad.

❑ Was it wrong of the sons to have married Moabite women?

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And He had told them never to take a wife from the Gentile lands surrounding them. It was forbidden for Jews to inter-marry with idol-worshippers:

Deuteronomy 23:3-6

Isaiah 52:11

II Corinthians 6:14-18

But, in their defense, there were exceptions. They would have known the story of Rahab. She was a harlot from an idol-worshipping city who believed that the God of the Jews was the One, True God...and she put her life on the line to prove it. Wasn't she a non-Jew who was welcomed into the Jewish nation?

Joshua 6:24, 25

The answer to the question (was God mad at them?) is: we just don't know.

But...if God wasn't mad at them....if they weren't being punished by God....why was all this happening to them?

It's possible they were a weak little family doing the best they could. And life just beat them up. And God, whom they worshipped, let it happen. Why? By the time we get to the end of this book, we'll know.

3. (:6-7) Why did Naomi and her daughters-in-law start back to Israel?

Because they had no where else to go. Maybe in Israel there would be some hope of survival.

4. (:8-13) Why did Naomi tell each of her daughters-in-law to go back to their family homes?

Because going back to Israel made sense for Naomi. She could find a small shelter to live in, and beg for food until she died. But she knew that the girls might have a chance to find another husband if they went back to their Moab families – maybe there would be a man of Moab who had been widowed who would not mind marrying a young, beautiful, although "used" wife.

But in Israel there was no hope for Orpah and Ruth. If Naomi had been younger herself she could possibly have married again and born

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another son. Then either Orpah or Ruth would have had the right, legally, to be married to that other son, and have a future. But Naomi was past child-bearing age. And there was no reason to think any man in Israel would want a Moabite widow for his wife. There was no future in Israel for Orpah and Ruth. If they returned to Israel with Naomi, they would have to beg to eat, too.

Apparently, Naomi loved these two girls enough to want the best for them, even though their loss would be tragic for her.

5. (:13) What word in verse 13 gives you a clue to the state of Naomi's heart and mind?

"The Lord's hand has gone out against me." She is bitter. She is beaten down. I'll bet she's very afraid. She believes the One, True God has raised his hand to her.

- What is "bitterness"? Is it a sin? Is it preventable? Is it curable?

Bitterness. That hard place in your chest which you won't let go of... because someone has chosen to fail you utterly. She is bitter against God. She believes in Him. She knows He exists. But she thinks He has not loved her. She thinks He is not all He claims to be.

Bitterness is a cancer which hides within. Sometimes it hides a very long time before it is acknowledged. And while it hides it does damage. Proverbs 14:10 says "Each heart knows its own bitterness, and no one else can share its joy." Bitterness is private.

Proverbs 17:25 says "A foolish son brings grief to his father and bitterness to the one who bore him". Bitterness runs deep and stays long.

Romans 3:14, in describing the wicked of the world, says "...their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness." Bitterness is a characteristic of evil.

What could possibly melt and remove bitterness? Is there a cure? Watch and see.

6. (:14-18) Why did Orpah go? Why did Ruth stay?

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Orpah chose survival by going back to her family...to their Gods....to a possible future in a familiar place. She made a practical choice.

Ruth chose to beg to stay with Naomi, and to throw her future into the hands of the God of her husband. A God she had just learned about in the last few years. But a God, apparently, who was proclaimed to her by her new family – the family she had come to love. Ruth made a faith choice. And a love choice.

7. (:19-22) What clues do you see which indicate things are not as dark as Naomi thinks?

1. Naomi talks about her bitterness – a good sign. She is not keeping it locked up inside where it will poison her even more.
2. Naomi is going back to God's land – even when she is not sure He likes her anymore – she is unconsciously choosing God, even when she speaks bitterly of Him. She is turning towards God...going in His direction.
3. Naomi's friends surround her at her return – she has community.
4. Ruth, her lovely daughter-in-law is with her. – she has family.
5. The famine is over.
6. The barley harvest has just begun...there will be food to survive.

□ Why couldn't Naomi see these good things?

Bitter, afraid, beat down. Naomi didn't have to see the good signs, though. God works even when we are unable to see what He is doing.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

8. When tragedy comes into your life, how do you know whether or not it is God telling you that you have done something wrong? (James 5:13-16)

9. Ever been mad at God? Bitter? What should you do? (Ephesians 4:31&32)

10. Have you ever made a "faith" choice instead of a "practical" choice? How did it turn out?

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11. Is it possible you think things are worse than they really are?
What clues could you look for to tell you how things really are?
12. Why do bad things happen to good people?

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...And Hope Does Not Disappoint Us

Ruth Chapter 2 - Questions

Memory verse for this study:

"... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

Discussion Questions for Chapter 2

First, read chapter 2.

Then, before you answer the questions for chapter 2, read Romans 5:1-5. Put each phrase into your own words:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

through whom

we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.

And we rejoice

in the hope of the glory of God.

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings,

Because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

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perseverance, character;

and character, hope.

And hope does not disappoint us,

*because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit,
whom He has given us.*

1. Do you think Romans 5:1-5 describes Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth?

Now...read Ruth Chapter 2 again, and note, as you read, the character traits of Boaz:

2. What did you learn about Boaz – what is he like?

-
-
-
-
-

4. Why was Boaz attracted to Ruth? (:11&12)

5. What is happening to Naomi? (:19-23)

6. Have you experienced the *suffering > perseverance > character > hope* cycle in your life? Who benefits when you go through this cycle? (James 1:2-4)

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...And Hope Does Not Disappoint Us

Ruth Chapter 2 - Discussion Notes

Memory verse for this study:

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Discussion Questions for Chapter 2

First, read chapter 2.

Then, before you answer the questions for chapter 2, read Romans 5:1-5. Put each phrase into your own words:

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith

Because I have believed what God said, and that made me OK with God,

we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom
I am at peace with God, and Jesus is the One Who made it possible

we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand.
for God's grace to come to me as I believed the truth about Him.

And we rejoice

I'm full of happiness

in the hope of the glory of God.

at the thought of someday seeing God in all His glory

Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings,

And not only that, but I'm also happy when I suffer!

Because we know that suffering produces perseverance;

Why? Because when I suffer I learn to not give up – I keep on believing God,

perseverance, character;

and that completes me as a person,

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and character, hope.

which in turn changes me into a person who has an eye on the future, not just on the now,

And hope does not disappoint us,

And I know I will not be disappointed when the future is here, and I can see what I have been hoping for.

because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.

How do I know that? God the Holy Spirit is pouring His love into my life right now – I have no doubt it will be even more so in the future.

1. Do you think Romans 5:1-5 describes Naomi's daughter-in-law, Ruth?

Yes. She has suffered, persevered, developed character, and makes her decisions for the future based on hope. And she seems to not only love God, but also realize how much God loves her.

Now...read Ruth Chapter 2 again, and note, as you read, the character traits of Boaz:

2. What did you learn about Boaz – what is he like?

- :1 Relative of Elimilech
- :2 A man of importance in his community
- :4 A man of God – the words of God are his conversation
- :5 Notices the little people – good leader
- :8 Protective of the weak
- :9 Morally upright
- :10 Attracted to people of faith
- :15&16 Kind and thoughtful of others' needs and feelings
- :20 Has a sense of responsibility for family

4. Why was Boaz attracted to Ruth? (:11&12)

She also was responsible, kind and thoughtful, a woman of faith, and morally upright. He was attracted to her because she was like the God he was in love with.

5. What is happening to Naomi? (:19-23)

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She is beginning to see the signs of hope all around her.

6. Have you experienced the *suffering > perseverance > character > hope* cycle in your life? Who benefits when you go through this cycle? (James 1:2-4)

Most of us can point to times in our lives when this has happened to us. James, many years after the time of Ruth, also experienced this cycle, and had learned from it: *"Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything."*

Walking by hope through a suffering experience means that we allow the suffering to push us closer to Jesus. And in so doing, we become the people God had in mind when He created us. We are completed. And we have something to draw on when others need our advice in their suffering. We can tell them – "Look to Jesus to be your rescuer. Pray. Trust Him no matter how things look."

There is no better way to walk through difficulty. Trusting God eventually will become our first choice, our first thought....not our last. And we will never be disappointed when we choose the faith / hope path instead of the worry path or the manipulation path or the helplessness path or the anger path or the bitterness path.

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Extravagant Provision

Ruth Chapter 3 - Questions

Memory verse for this study:

"... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

Let's begin this chapter by backing up to Chapter 2:20 "...that man is our close relative; he is one of our *kinsmen-redeemers*."

1. What is a "kinsman-redeemer"? Leviticus 25:23-25
2. Why didn't Naomi simply return to Israel, find a kinsman-redeemer, and demand to be redeemed? Why was she willing to return poverty-stricken, and live that way?
3. :1-2 Why wasn't Naomi thinking a kinsman-redeemer would redeem her? Why was it going to be Ruth? Wasn't Naomi the wife of the man who had originally owned the land?
4. How does the "Kinsman-Redeemer" law picture our salvation?
5. In what way are we the same as Ruth?
6. :1-9 How do Ruth's actions in 3:1-9 parallel our experience of coming to Christ?
7. :10-15 What does Boaz's reaction in 3:10-15 show us about how the Lord feels about us?...and the motive for His decision to redeem us?
8. What can we learn about a Godly man-woman relationship from Ruth & Boaz? (see also I Peter 3:1-7)
9. :16 -18 From 3: 16-18, describe the confidence Naomi has in Boaz. What can we learn from that when it comes to our Redeemer? What do you suppose Naomi is feeling as she realizes her "poverty" is

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only a day or so away from being over? What do we compare that to as we think in terms of our own salvation?

10. Compare Ruth's Kinsman-Redeemer with our Kinsman-Redeemer:

Fact	Ruth/Boaz	Us/Jesus
There has to be something which needs to be redeemed	Elimilech's land	
There has to be qualified... the closest "kinsman" /relative	Boaz qualified..he was related to Elimilech.	
The Kinsman-redeemer has to have the money to make the purchase	Boaz was a man of wealth. He could afford to buy the land.	
The Kinsman-redeemer has to agree to take all of the property which needs to be redeemed, not just a part of it	Boaz was willing to buy back the land, and to provide a marriage and a child for Elimilech's widow (Kilion's widow)	
The Kinsman-redeemer has to be willing – not forced.	Boaz was willing	



Extravagant Provision

Ruth Chapter 3 - Discussion Notes

Memory verse for this study:

"... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

Let's begin this chapter by backing up to Chapter 2:20 "...that man is our close relative; he is one of our *kinsmen-redeemers*."

1. What is a "kinsman-redeemer"? Leviticus 25:23-25, Deut. 25:5-10

Leviticus tells us that when the Lord gave the land of Israel to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, he intended for that land to always stay in their possession. The people of Israel were divided up into 12 tribes, and each tribe of Israel had certain lands which were assigned to them. They were the caretakers of the land, but were never to think of themselves as the owners. God was the owner.

Because of that, they were to always keep "ownership" of each parcel of the land within each tribe. If any Jewish person became so poor that he/she had to sell land in order to survive, the Jewish law made a provision for that land to be bought back some day by someone else from the same tribe of Israel.

The nearest relative to the person who had to sell the land had the right and the responsibility to, if he could, buy back the land which had been sold. That nearest relative was called a "kinsman-redeemer". A kinsman who would "redeem" (or buy back) what had been lost.

Simple enough. But Deuteronomy tells us a little more. The kinsman-redeemer not only had to be able to buy back the land, he also had to be willing to marry the widow (if there was one) and provide for her. And part of that provision was to give her a son who would carry on the family name and would be the future owner of the land which had been bought back.

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Not every qualified "kinsman-redeemer" would want to jeopardize his own inheritance to his own sons by bringing another son into the family who would eventually go his own way...own his own land. And not every one would want to take on a wife, either.

Refusal to be the kinsman-redeemer was allowed....for this had to be a free choice, not forced. But it was shameful to refuse – for it meant the qualified kinsman-redeemer cared more for his own interests than for the interests of the nation as a whole.

3. :1-2 Why wasn't Naomi thinking a kinsman-redeemer would redeem her? Why was it going to be Ruth? Wasn't Naomi the wife of the man who had originally owned the land?

There would be no future for Elimilech's land – no posterity – unless Kilion's young widow could offer herself as a bride for a kinsman-redeemer. Since Kilion rightfully inherited the land from his father on his father's death, Ruth was indeed the legal choice.

4. How does the "Kinsman-Redeemer" law picture our salvation?

We are like the children of Israel in that we have lost our inheritance. The Lord God, when He created us, intended us to live with Him forever. When Adam and Eve sinned, our inheritance was lost. We needed a Kinsman to come in and "redeem" us...buy us back.

Jesus is our Kinsman-redeemer. He is related to us because He is human like us. He is qualified in every way – including the fact that He was willing to pay the price for our redemption. His life was the price.

5. In what way are we the same as Ruth?

We need to be redeemed. We are not even qualified to be in the family of God, since we are sinners. Our only hope is our kinsman-redeemer.

6. :1-9 How do Ruth's actions in 3:1-9 parallel our experience of coming to Christ?

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She comes just as she is to the one who could save her. She offers herself, knowing she doesn't have any claim on him. She waits in hope to see if he will accept her. She does whatever he says to do.

7. :10-15 What does Boaz's reaction in 3:10-15 show us about how the Lord feels about us?...and the motive for His decision to redeem us?

He loves us. He reacts to our coming with genuine love and concern for us.

8. What can we learn about a Godly man-woman relationship from Ruth & Boaz? (see also I Peter 3:1-7)

They protected each other. They trusted each other. They chose purity.

She submitted to his leadership. She brought her strengths and abilities and faith.

9. :16 -18 From 3: 16-18, describe the confidence Naomi has in Boaz. What can we learn from that when it comes to our Redeemer? What do you suppose Naomi is feeling as she realizes her "poverty" is only a day or so away from being over? What do we compare that to as we think in terms of our own salvation?

Naomi knew the reputation of Boaz. She knew that he would be true to his word. She is full of hope again.

Once we know who Jesus is, and realize He never lied, and everything He said we could trust to be true, then we have confidence that He will do everything He said He would do. He paid the redemption price for our sin. He will always be with us. He is coming back again to take us forever to a place to live with him.

When we come to faith in Christ our poverty is over. And we are only a "day or so" away from ever being even reminded of it again.

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10. Compare Ruth's Kinsman-Redeemer with our Kinsman-Redeemer:

Fact	Ruth/Boaz	Us/Jesus
There has to be something which needs to be redeemed	Elimilech's land	We are what needs to be redeemed (John 3:16)
There has to be someone qualified... the closest "kinsman" /relative	Boaz qualified..he was related to Elimilech.	Jesus is qualified because he was a human being, just like we are. (John 1:14)
The Kinsman-redeemer has to have the money to make the purchase	Boaz was a man of wealth. He could afford to buy the land.	Jesus had the purchase price. His life. (John 10:14)
The Kinsman-redeemer has to agree to take all of the property which needs to be redeemed, not just a part of it	Boaz was willing to buy back the land, and to provide a marriage and a child for Elimilech's widow (Kilion's widow)	He was willing to buy it all – the whole world. (John 3:16)
The Kinsman-redeemer has to be willing – not forced.	Boaz was willing	Jesus was willing. He gave His life. No one took it from Him. (John 10:17&18)



It's All About the Future

Ruth Chapter 4 - Questions

Memory verse for this study:

"... to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness; that they might be called trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he might be glorified." (Isaiah 61:3)

A few beginning thoughts:

Because of the culture in which we live, we could miss the importance of what happens in this book.

In our culture the marriage is all about the two people getting married. The wedding is a celebration of a milestone reached – a goal achieved – two lives becoming one – happiness and fulfillment guaranteed.

But in the culture of Old Testament times – especially in the Hebrew culture – the marriage is all about the "future" to come out of the union. The wedding is a celebration of the future – wrapped up in the yet-to-be-born child – who will carry on the family line, guarantee the old-age pension for the parents, occupy the land, and, in the big picture, hold out the promise of a future.

The union of Ruth and Boaz is a *romance* in our eyes – but in the eyes of the people who lived through it, it is a *promise of the future*.

The *love* was less important than the *hope*.

Questions for Chapter 4:

1. When Boaz sat at the town gate where business was conducted, why do you think he waited so long – even after the discussion of the property – to bring up Ruth? Verses 1-5
2. Why didn't the nearest kinsman want to redeem the land? Have you experienced times in your life when someone could have helped

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you out, but chose not to. What did you do when someone wouldn't or couldn't come to your rescue? verses 6-10

3. In the elders' blessing, why might they refer to Rachel & Leah, two sisters married to Jacob (Genesis 30:1-22)... and Perez, the son of Judah & Tamar, his daughter-in-law (Genesis 38) ?

4. What is the significance of the blessing given to Naomi from the women?

What is the significance of their praise of Ruth? verses 13-16

5. What do the elders' prayers and the women's wishes tell you about the community's values? (Psalm 127:3, 128:3)

6. Why do you think the book ends with the genealogy in verses 18-22?

7. Read Matthew 1:1-16. How does this genealogy differ from the one at the end of Ruth? How is it the same?

8. Sketch out a genealogy for yourself – make it as long as you can. Now sketch out a *spiritual* genealogy for yourself... make it as long as you can.

Compare the two genealogies – what do you learn from them? Are you listed somewhere on someone's spiritual genealogy?

9. When you think of your future, what do you think of?

10. Give someone in your group a blessing for the future.

Example: May your summer days be like the Bahamas in June

May you be more beautiful ten years from now than you are today.

May you dance on the streets of gold

May you spend forever doing the things you love to do.

May you see the face of Jesus the instant you take your last breath.

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It's All About the Future

Ruth Chapter 4 - Discussion Notes

Memory verse for this study:

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A few beginning thoughts:

Because of the culture in which we live, we could miss the importance of what happens in this book.

In our culture the marriage is all about the two people getting married. The wedding is a celebration of a milestone reached – a goal achieved – two lives becoming one – happiness and fulfillment guaranteed.

But in the culture of Old Testament times – especially in the Hebrew culture – the marriage is all about the "future" to come out of the union. The wedding is a celebration of the future – wrapped up in the yet-to-be-born child – who will carry on the family line, guarantee the old-age pension for the parents, occupy the land, and, in the big picture, hold out the promise of a future.

The union of Ruth and Boaz is a *romance* in our eyes – but in the eyes of the people who lived through it, it is a *promise of the future*.

The *love* was less important than the *hope*.

Questions for Chapter 4:

1. When Boaz sat at the town gate where business was conducted, why do you think he waited so long – even after the discussion of the property – to bring up Ruth? Verses 1-5

Because he wanted to do the whole thing right. He wanted there to be no question about what the other kinsman-redeemer was accepting or rejecting.

This had to be a "clean deal". He didn't want to lose Ruth on a technicality.

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2. Why didn't the nearest kinsman want to redeem the land? Have you experienced times in your life when someone could have helped you out, but chose not to. What did you do when someone wouldn't or couldn't come to your rescue? verses 6-10

Somehow the buying of the land and taking Ruth on as a wife would hurt the property and inheritance he had already accumulated. Perhaps he knew his wife would never stand for it. Perhaps he had sons of his own and didn't want another son around to mess up what he had already parceled out.

3. In the elders' blessing, why might they refer to Rachel & Leah, two sisters married to Jacob (Genesis 30:1-22).... and Perez, the son of Judah & Tamar, his daughter-in-law (Genesis 38) ?

Rachel and Leah together brought Jacob 12 sons. Many sons were a great blessing. And Perez was a son born out of season. A son who really had no chance of existing, but did. (A son who carried the seed of the Messiah – which we know, but they wouldn't have known then).

Rachel and Leah's 12 sons were a blessing. Perez was a miracle. They are praying for blessings and miracles for Ruth and Boaz.

4. What is the significance of the blessing given to Naomi from the women?

What is the significance of their praise of Ruth? verses 13-16

The grandson in Naomi's arms was her future. Ruth had obeyed and trusted and had faith in God....and had given Naomi a future.

5. What do the elders' prayers and the women's wishes tell you about the community's values? (Psalm 127:3, 128:3)

They knew that children were a gift from God, not just the result of sex. They knew that a home was built by God, not people. They knew that power and protection came from God. They knew that many sons made a man of true wealth.

6. Why do you think the book ends with the genealogy in verses 18-22?

To prove that the son who came from Ruth and Boaz was the grandfather of King David.

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7. Read Matthew 1:1-16. How does this genealogy differ from the one at the end of Ruth? How is it the same?

Of course the huge difference is that the Matthew genealogy goes on to show that the son of Ruth and Boaz was in the line of the Messiah of Israel.

But, also, there is a small difference. Look who the mother of Boaz is! She was Rahab, the non-Jewish harlot who believed in the One, True God, and became a part of the nation of Israel when the walls of Jericho came "a-tumblin'" down.

8. Sketch out a genealogy for yourself – make it as long as you can. Now sketch out a *spiritual* genealogy for yourself... make it as long as you can.

Compare the two genealogies – what do you learn from them? Are you listed somewhere on someone's spiritual genealogy?

9. When you think of your future, what do you think of? Is your life all about the future?

10. Give someone in your group a blessing for the future.
Example:

1. *May your summer days be like the Bahamas in June*
2. *May you be more beautiful ten years from now than you are today.*
3. *May you dance on the streets of gold*
4. *May you spend forever doing the things you love to do*
5. *May you see the face of Jesus the instant you take your last breath.*