



RUTH

Study Guide

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Ruth: Chosen Daughter of God

Welcome to the AS IT WAS Bible Series. This guide will provide a method for viewing the DVD episode with a small study group. To get the most out of the Ruth episode, it is best if you can devote two full group sessions to viewing and discussing the story. In between the group sessions, there are six daily lessons for home study that will allow participants to thoroughly review the actual scripture passages that are mentioned throughout the episode. We recommend following three steps to get the most from the AS IT WAS series as a Bible Study Tool:

1) VIEW → 2) STUDY → 3) VIEW AGAIN

If you only have a limited time, you can view the DVD, choose a few questions to discuss together and then use the personal study guides to review the scripture later, as time permits.

✦ **BACKGROUND:** The period in which the events of recorded in the book of Ruth (the time in which the judges ruled) are among the worst in Israel's history. Like the period of decline within the ancient Roman Empire, the Israelite nation began to crumble from within. The book of Judges repeatedly states that during this time "everyone did as he saw fit". As each family or group fought for its rights alone, the society became fractured. The book of Judges runs downhill, from bad to worse. The last five chapters contain some of the ugliest stories in the Bible – tales of homosexual assault, idolatry, civil war, thievery, rape and murder. No enemy does all this: Israelites do it to each other. Clearly, the exalted nation of Israel, God's chosen people, has lost its sense of direction. The book of Ruth shines like a beautiful diamond against this bleak background.¹


Ruth's touching story is one of relationship, renewal, and redemption as we see God working in the lives of *common people*. We observe how the small family of Elimelech fares in the foreign country of Moab, and as the story unfolds, we learn of God's provision for all of his children: rich, poor, married, widowed, orphaned. Through ordinary people God works His will for the world.

🕒 Watch the Ruth DVD

¹ Bill Nelson, InterVarsity Press

Biblical or Extra-Biblical


In every AS IT WAS episode, there are characters that are biblical (i.e. they appear in the actual biblical account) and there are characters that are ‘extra-biblical’ (i.e. they do not appear in the biblical account, but there is reasonable evidence that they existed). In the episode of Ruth we heard from six characters. Four of these characters are biblical and two are extra-biblical.


 Briefly Skim Ruth 1-4 and circle whether the characters below are biblical or extra-biblical

Petron: Father:	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Obed: Son	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Naomi: Mother-In-Law	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Hella: Servant of Boaz	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Ploni: Kinsman	Biblical	Extra-Biblical
Boaz: Kinsman	Biblical	Extra-Biblical

Group Discussion Questions


After viewing the DVD, and depending on the time available, select a few questions from those listed below and discuss them with your group.


 According to the AS IT WAS episode, what are some of the characteristics Ruth possessed?

 MOTHER-IN-LAW's!!! (Now that's a scary topic) Describe the relationship between Naomi and Ruth. How does Naomi dispel the stereotypic in-law? If you are an in-law, what might you apply?

ICON KEY

 Discussion

 Note Section

 Background

 Scripture Reading

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✎ Discuss the insights Naomi might have shared with Ruth about adjusting to and living in a different culture.

✎ “Wherever you go, I will go. Wherever you will sleep, I will sleep. Your people are my people. Your God is my God,” is Ruth’s most defining statement. It is also mentioned as her “conversion”. Discuss Ruth’s statement and her commitment. How does this “conversion” compare with yours?

✎ Ruth’s father portrayed Naomi as a ‘smart woman’ who perhaps manipulated the situation in order to get to Boaz’s wealth. Do you think that was Naomi’s character? Why or why not?

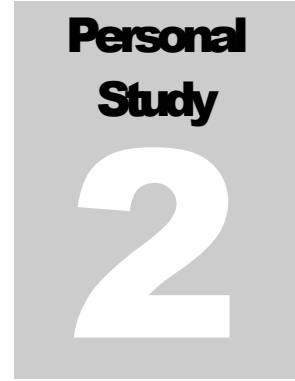
✎ Ruth’s presence caused all kinds of an uproar in Boaz’s world. Tell what the employee’s thought of the “new girl in town”. When someone new enters your world, perhaps a new co-worker, what is your reaction? Do attitudes change as time goes on? Give examples, please.

✎ Boaz “redeemed” Elimelech’s land and also was able to marry Ruth. Was Boaz ethical in his approach? What questions were raised in your mind?

✎ This episode of our AS IT WAS DVD ends with, “*and they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, who was the father of David.*” What is the significance of knowing that lineage? How does that influence future generations? (See Matt 1:3-6)

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✎ What does this account tell you about the Almighty, Father God? How might you be encouraged by this true story of ordinary, hard-working people and their significance to Him?




Going Deeper: Personal Study Lessons

☆ Ruth: Chosen daughter of God


In this section, there are six daily lessons for your personal study time in order to dig deeper into the scripture story of Ruth once you have viewed the AS IT WAS episode on DVD. You will need your Bible and about 30 minutes a day to complete each lesson.


ICON KEY	
	Discussion
	Note Section
☆	Background
	Scripture Reading

DAY ONE


 READ Ruth 1-4, Galatians 5:22, 23

☆ Scripture states that Ehlimelech moved his family to Moab and indicates that he died shortly thereafter. Sons, Kilion and Mahlon married Moabites, but after about 10 years they also died. Ruth 1:7 states, *“With her two daughters-in-law she left the place where she had been living and set out on the road that would take them back to the land of Judah.”*


 Why did Naomi choose to make the journey to Judah?

 In reading this portion, Orpah and Ruth were going to accompany Naomi. What might have been going through their minds?

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 The name Naomi means “pleasant, lovely.” Galatians 5:22-23 lists a believer’s fruit of the Spirit. These attributes are ones that Paul said would be evident in a believer’s life. Based on what we read in the book of Ruth, note where Naomi displays these attributes.


- Love _____
- Joy _____
- Peace _____
- Patience _____
- Kindness _____
- Goodness _____
- Faithfulness _____
- Gentleness _____
- Self-control _____


 Ruth 1:20-21 exemplifies Naomi’s anguish in/with life. What name does she want to be called now? Is this name appropriate?

DAY TWO

 **READ** Ruth 1:16,17


✧ Naomi’s life was a testimony to her relationship with God. Naomi’s testimony helped convince Ruth of the reality of God and her need to follow Him.

 Using what you learned on Day 1 and with the above statement, describe the relationship between daughter-in-law, Ruth and mother-in-law, Naomi.

 Is there someone in your life that you feel you offer this type of fidelity? Describe the relationship.

 Is there someone who might offer to you this unwavering devotion? Why?

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 Does this describe the love you have for Christ Jesus? Explain. Do you desire that kind of a relationship with God? What will help you move closer to that relationship?


DAY THREE

 REVIEW Ruth 1-4

✧ Hebrew culture is rich with traditions and provisions. Mosaic Law stipulated how society was to care for and treat widows, orphans and the poor. Today's study will help to clarify these old world traditions.


Read Ruth 1: 11-13, Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Describe provision for a widow.


 Read Ruth 2:2-3, 8-9, Leviticus 19:9, Leviticus 23:22, Deuteronomy 24:19. Describe this provision of food for the poor.

 Read Ruth 2:1, 20, Ruth 3:9-13, Ruth 4:1-11, Leviticus 25:25, Deuteronomy 25:5-10. Describe 'kinsman-redeemer.'

DAY FOUR

 READ Ruth 2-4


 Boaz is a real life hero. We learn through these Scriptures that he is an older, more established businessman and a distant family relation to Ehlimelech. List the attributes and actions that lead us to see him as a "hero".

 Based on your interpretation of these chapters, were the actions Boaz took because he “fell in love at first sight”, or did these feelings evolve as he became better acquainted? Please cite verses that support your stance.

DAY FIVE


 READ Ruth 3 & 4

✧ Wise Naomi continued to protect her daughter-in-law by helping to devise a plan to secure Boaz as kinsman-redeemer (Ruth 3:1-9). However, Naomi’s plan placed Ruth in a very vulnerable position.

 What was Boaz reaction to this overture by Ruth?

 How did Boaz once again honor Naomi, his kinsman? Ruth 3:14-18


 Did Naomi’s trust display her faith in the Almighty?


 When we are faced with situations that are uncontrollable, what can we learn from Naomi?


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DAY SIX


 READ Ruth 4, Lev 24:25, Deut 25:10

 Please review day three's final question on kinsman-redeemer. What was Boaz approach in securing both Elimelech's land and Ruth's hand in marriage?



 Why did the nearer relative choose not to purchase the land? How significant was the exchange of sandal?

 How are Boaz's actions like those of Jesus?

 Read Colossians 3:12-15. List the characteristics Ruth possesses which exemplify her commitment to God Almighty. Does your life reflect these Christ-like characteristics?

 In the final verses of the book of Ruth, how does Naomi react to all that has transpired? To whom does she attribute her blessing? Will you, too, place your trust in Him?

ICON KEY

 Discussion Note Section Background Scripture Reading

Sharing the Learning: Group Review

☆ Ruth: Chosen daughter of God.

In this section, we review what we learned as we studied the scripture during the daily lessons and we watch the Ruth episode with new insights and understanding of the Hebrew culture, Moabite Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz, Kinsman-redeemer.

The book of Ruth is about relationship. We learn of the love between a mother and daughter-in-law, the love that grew between a man and a woman, and the evolving relationship between a woman of faith and her God. We see that God uses a willing foreigner to further his plan of redemption. Ruth is adopted into the family of God and is the great-grandmother to future king of Israel, David, and distant relative to Jesus, our Messiah!

As we read through Ruth we learn of survival by both Naomi and Ruth in foreign lands. We hear of the beautiful commitment by Ruth, not only her mother-in-law, but also to Naomi's God. Imagine the witness Naomi gave those ten years while she mourned her husband and sons. Even through tragedy and heartache Naomi's faith must have been evident. Naomi struggled with God, blamed God (Ruth 1:13, 20, 21), and eventually renewed her relationship with God.

The book of Ruth also introduces us to the concept of "kinsman-redeemer" which helps us understand more fully the sacrifice Jesus made for the world. Like Boaz, Jesus, voluntarily agreed to pay in full the price necessary in to redeem His bride, (the church). Jesus assumed all responsibility, and paid for us with His blood on the cross.

⌘ Watch the Ruth DVD.

Group Discussion Questions

After viewing the DVD, Discuss the following topics with your group.

✎ What new perspectives did you have on the characters when you watched it this time? Who did you see differently and why?

✎ If you were filming the life of Ruth, is there something or someone you would have added to this film, which was not included? Why is the scene or person you selected important to you?

✎ What encouragement did you receive as you came to know the character of Ruth more fully?

✎ Adversity is a part of every day life. Using Ruth and Naomi's examples of dealing with adversity, will you change the way you deal with problems and obstacles? How?

✎ What did you learn about God's character as you studied the scripture behind this story?

Review

The story of Ruth once again re-iterates that God is in control of all circumstances. God knew Elimelech's family's plight. He wasn't taken by surprise when Elimelech and the boys died. He placed Ruth under Naomi's tutelage, and began to work His plans for the salvation of the world. From this story in Ruth we learn:

- 1) **God works His will through the lives of every day people.** God used the lives of a poor widow, a foreigner, and a businessman to further His kingdom and fulfill his plan for eternity. God can and will use ordinary, everyday people who are devoted to Him, to further His kingdom.
- 2) **It is a choice how we react to adversity and in whom we place our trust.** We are allowed to choose how we will react to tragedy and misfortune. Our attitude in the face of hardship is a choice. We note that Naomi feels the Lord turned his hand against her, yet it seems she continues to hope and wait on the Lord to work the situation (s) out. She chose to wait for the Lord. We, too, must CHOOSE to place our trust and hope in God no matter how desperate circumstances become.
- 3) **Relationships are important.** In our culture today we don't often learn of amiable relationships with "THE IN-LAWS". In this book, however, we see love grow between Naomi and Ruth to the point that Ruth is considered "better than seven sons". What a complement! We also see the importance of family relationships and caring for family members who are less able to care for themselves.
- 4) **God's plan for salvation is for all nations, Jews and Gentiles.** By including Ruth in the lineage of David and Jesus, God shows that His plan for redemption encompasses all mankind. The choice to accept God's call, however, is up to each individual.

In Isaiah 18:4 states the Lord said, "I will be quiet and look on..." All three major characters in this story, Naomi, Ruth, & Boaz must all have wondered at one time or another where God was and if He would intervene sometime SOON! God, in his incredible wisdom was watching and waiting for the perfect time when He could step in and work things to His glory. Through their struggles we learn more of the character of God and we also learn from people who are just like us! Are you encouraged that God can and wants to do great things in your life as well? It's all a matter of choice.

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☒ Action Item

Ask God to lead you in the direction He wants. Pray for God to use you as He did Naomi, Ruth and Boaz to further His kingdom. Be encouraged that God can take any situation and turn it into a blessing. Look for the miracles and believe that God is watching over you even when He seems to be silent.