



## Introduction to Ruth

*Ruth 1:1-5*

### What Is Ruth About?

#### An Example of the \_\_\_\_\_ Woman

Ruth can be read as an example of the virtuous woman of Proverbs 31. In the Hebrew ordering of the OT Ruth comes right after Proverbs 31, and Ruth is called a virtuous woman (3:11).

#### An Important Link in the \_\_\_\_\_ of God's Plan

Ruth is an important transition from the dark, depressing stories of Judges to set the stage for the rise of David.

- Ruth shows God's hand at work in a dark period.
- Ruth shows the origin of King David.

#### A Picture of \_\_\_\_\_ and the \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, many people have noted that Ruth is a book that paints a vivid picture of Christ and His church.

### A Family's Fateful Flight (1:1-5)

The opening of Ruth shows us a family that is faced with a problem, responds wrongly, and sees things go from bad to worse.

#### The Setting (1:1-2)

How a story begins is important. As you read the opening verses of Ruth, ask yourself what kind of story you would be expecting if the first two verses are all you knew.



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#### The Setting (1:1-2)

How a story begins is important. As you read the opening verses of Ruth, ask yourself what kind of story you would be expecting if the first two verses are all you knew.

- \_\_\_\_\_ **did the story take place?** The book of Judges shows a continually downward spiral. Ruth begins by letting us know the story is taking place during this time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **kicks off the action?** In Ruth the main story is kicked off with a famine. This was the judgment of God and pointed to the spiritually poor state the country at this time.
- \_\_\_\_\_ **does the story take place?** Bethlehem-judah shows up in the sordid stories at the end of Judges. Moab was an enemy of Israel, the nation came from an incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughter (Gen 19:30-38) and succeeded in seducing Israel to immorality and idolatry (Num 25:1-9).
- \_\_\_\_\_ **is in this story?** The names in Ruth are ironic: Bethlehem means “house of bread;” Elimelech means “My God is King;” Naomi means “Lovely,” but she changes her name to Marah “bitter;” Mahlon means “sickly” and Chilion means “deathly.”

### The Opening Scene (1:3-5)

If the first few verses set us up for expecting a bad story, the next two verses seem to confirm to us that things will not be a happy ending.

- **A \_\_\_\_\_ (1:3)**  
Elimelech left Israel, the land of God’s promise, to try to escape God’s judgment. Elimelech learned the hard way that running from God’s chastening never makes life easier.
- **Two \_\_\_\_\_ (1:4)**  
For Israel to marry foreign women was a problem addressed several times in Scripture (cf Ezra, Nehemiah, Deuteronomy 7:3-4; 28:32).
- **Two \_\_\_\_\_ (1:5)**  
The lowpoint in the story comes mercifully early, but how devastating it must have been for Naomi. After losing her husband she lost both sons and was now alone in a strange country with nothing but two foreign women as daughters-in-law. But God in His mercy is not done with Naomi, as we will see in this story.

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