

Episode: Kings and Prophets Series No. 5

Narrator: Ruth

Primary Scriptures: *Ruth*

Story Summary: Ruth goes to Israel, Ruth meets and marries Boaz

Location: Moab, Israel

Time: Circa 1100 BC

Suggested Memory Scriptures: Ruth 1:16-17; 2:12; 4:14

Now that the importance of David has been established, this episode takes a step back in time to tell the story of David's paternal great-grandmother, Ruth. She is listed as an ancestor of David and Jesus in the Gospels of *Matthew* and *Luke*.

Ruth was from the nearby country of Moab; she was not an Israelite by birth. She became an Israelite when she married one of the two sons of Naomi. Naomi and her husband had previously moved to Moab to escape a famine in Israel. The fact that Ruth was from Moab may have been influential in David's ability to sequester his parents with the King of Moab when David was being chased by Saul.¹

Before Ruth or her sister-in-law could have children, Naomi's husband and her two sons died. Naomi was despondent and decided to go back to Israel, leaving the two young women behind in their home country to find new husbands. Ruth was so dedicated and faithful to her mother-in-law that she chose to go with her to Israel to live with her and to accept her God.

Completely impoverished, Naomi and Ruth moved to Bethlehem, the ancestral home of Naomi and her husband. It was the time of the barley harvest, so they took advantage of the commandments of Moses and harvested the scraps in a field owned by Boaz, a wealthy man.

Two pieces of good fortune immediately came into play. Boaz was attracted to Ruth, and it was discovered that Boaz was a relative of Naomi's dead husband. Always acting a gentleman, Boaz protected Ruth and made sure she collected a lot of barley. Naomi schemed for Ruth to attract Boaz, but her scheming was unneeded.

Boaz used a local tradition to attain the rights to take care of Naomi. From there it was a simple task for him to be able to marry Ruth. They quickly had a son, who turned out to be the grandfather of King David.

Although the book of *Ruth* is not a directly a book about God, it is a book about mercy, love, and restoration. It shows that God cares about both men and women, Jews and non-Jews, rich and poor. Boaz's role as a kinsman-redeemer is a symbol that his descendant, Jesus, will also be a kinsman-redeemer.

¹ 1 Samuel 22:3-4

Discussion Questions:

1. The first phrase in the book of *Ruth* is, "In the days when the judges ruled." What is the significance of this phrase?
 2. Ruth 1:2 says that the family of Elimelek were Ephrathites. What is an Ephrathite?
 3. When the famine hit, Elimelek's family went to Moab. Was that a wise choice?
 4. Boaz was a kinsman-redeemer of Naomi. What does that mean? Is it a foreshadowing of Jesus?
1. This story takes place near the end of the period of the judges, and is a transition to the time of the kings and prophets. 2. People descended from the wife of Caleb and mother of Hur, Ephrathah. These people lived near Ephrath, later called Bethlehem. It does not mean they were of the tribe of Ephraim. They were of the tribe of Judah. 3. The Moabites and Israelites were ancient enemies. The Moabites worshiped other gods, so Elimelek was exposing his family to that worship. That was especially dangerous because his sons would likely want to be married soon, and it was prohibited for them to marry Moabites. 4. The notion of a kinsman-redeemer is found in Leviticus 25. In the case of a man dying and not leaving any sons, the brother is supposed to take the widow as his wife so that she can have a son to inherit the land and carry on the family name. By laying at his feet, Ruth asked Boaz to fulfill that role. Most people think the story of Ruth is an indication of Jesus being our redeemer.

Application Questions:

1. Naomi wanted her Moabite daughters-in-law to stay in Moab because she knew they would be unlikely to marry any Israelites when they went to Bethlehem. Are you able to make hard decisions for the benefit of others even when it is to your detriment?
2. Ruth 1:15 is a famous verse. Ruth is declaring her determination to support her mother-in-law even when it is to Ruth's disadvantage. How many times in your life have you had to make long-term decisions that bind you to a potentially unfavorable situation? Were you glad you did so? Do you admire others who do so?

Application Questions for Teens:

1. According to Ruth 2:7 and 2:11, why do you think Boaz was first attracted to Ruth? After working in the fields all day, do you think she looked and smelled good?
2. Why did Boaz instruct his workers to aid Ruth in Ruth 2:15-16? (So she could prosper without having her pride hurt or feeling she was under obligation to him). Are you sensitive to the needs of others like Boaz was?
3. Ruth 3:10 shows Boaz's reaction to Ruth asking him to marry her. Apparently, he was a fair amount older than her, and did not consider himself worthy of her. How important are age and looks in your relationships? Will it always be that way? At what age do you think people start considering other factors when they want to have a relationship?