Ruth 4:13-22



Timeline of Ruth So far



AUTHOR AND DATE OF COMPOSITION

The Author is unknown (Early Jewish teachers believed Samuel wrote both Samuel and Ruth. Others believe the author is a woman because of the "softer side of God," and the beautiful themes of fidelity and Chesed. Ruth is "the most positive portrayal of women's relationships in biblical literature" (Jewish Study Bible.) In truth, we don't know who the author of this great short book is, and it is doubtful this author was a woman.

The setting is the time before the monarchy. There are a few theories about the time of composition:

a. Between the start of King David's reign and the Fall of the Northern Kingdom (950–722 B.C.E) This is the "Origin Story" theory.

b. An early treaty meant to counter Deuteronomy 23:3

d.

During the exilic period (586–500 B. C. E. as a powerful motivation piece to encourage the exiles to return home after the exile.)

After 500 B.C.E. as a powerful argument (and minority opinion) against Ezra 10:1–44 and Nehemiah 13: 23–31

Opening Prayer

Dear Lord,

We give you thanks for giving us the freedom, time, and resources to engage in this long-term study of the book of Ruth. We thank for blessing our time together and for speaking to us through this great narrative. Continue to bless us during this coming time of rest and continue to lead us through your Holy Word. In Jesus name we pray. Amen!

Almighty God our heavenly Father, graciously comfort your servant Allen in his suffering, and bless the means made use of for his cure. Fill his heart with confidence that, though at times he may be afraid, he yet may put his trust in you; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.





13 So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the Lord made her conceive, and she bore a son.

- 1. The passage doesn't tell us anything about the wedding, only that the marriage was consummated, and that Ruth conceived and gave birth to a boy.
- 2. Because of cultural studies we know that this would have been a large wedding, perhaps the social event of the season in this small village. Weddings usually began un a Tuesday or Wednesday and ended seven days later. This was done purposedly to allow for an entire weekend of festivities. Shepherds and farmers needed to arrive from the mountains and have time to purify themselves before they arrived at the feast (bathe, dress in Sunday's best, etc.)
- 3. For some men of wealth and substance, it was often customary for the host to provide wedding garments for the guests (a wedding robe, see Matt 22:11-14, Luke 14:16-24.)
- 4. It was expected at these banquets that the guests would bring wine to contribute to the festivities, more affluent families might bring a goat or a lamb.
- 5. Sadly, we don't have any of these rich details in Ruth's wedding.

The Lord made her conceive... Exodus 13:2 and 13:12

Genesis 18:10-14

Genesis 21:1

Genesis 30:22

Judges 13:3-5

1 Samuel 2;21

Isaiah 66:9

Psalm 113:9

2 Kings 4:13-16

1 Samuel 1: 11, 17

1 Samuel 2:5

The motif of barrenness highlights the unique destiny of the promised son. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Samson, Samuel, Shunammite's boy (Elisha,)

These narratives suggest that God who opens the womb, has the right to demand the life that emerges from it. (Rachel Adelman at JWA Encyclopedia)



14 Then the women said to Naomi, 'Blessed be the Lord, who has not left you this day without next-of-kin; and may his name be renowned in Israel!

- 1. The Levitical law is clear that the child who is to be born of a Levirate marriage restores the bloodline of the dead patriarch or head of household. In a theological way, this child (although Ruth's and Boaz's) is Abimelech's boy, which means that he is Naomi's son. He will most likely be raised by both women in close collaboration, and he will grow to inherit Abimelech's land and possessions.
- 2. The benediction, "Blessed be the Lord" has a very specific reason: God has not left Naomi without a next-of-kin. Boaz has stood on the bridge. He has taken the mantle. He has fulfilled the law. He has done the honorable thing. This prayer does three thigs at once: It rejoices with Naomi, it praises Boaz, and it casts judgement on so-and-so who refused to fulfil the law.
- 3. "May his name be renowned in Israel" acts here in two ways: "May God's name be renowned for what he has done," but most likely, "May this child be renowned." This is like saying, "May he grow to accomplish everything God wants him to accomplish."



15 He shall be to you a restorer of life and a nourisher of your old age; for your daughter-in-law who loves you, who is more to you than seven sons, has borne him.'

"And he shall be unto thee a restorer of thy life,.... Of the joys, pleasures, and comforts of it, which she had been deprived of through the death of her husband and her two sons, ever since which she had lived a sorrowful life; all the comfort she had was from her daughter-in-law, and now a grandchild being born to her of her would be a means of restoring comfort to her mourning sorrowful spirit, and give her pleasure in those years in which she did not expect any: and a nourisher of thine old age; that would when grown up feed her, support her, and supply her with all necessaries of life, being heir to a large and rich estate:

for thy daughter in law which loveth thee; Ruth the wife of Boaz, who had shown her love, in leaving her own country and kindred, to come along with her into a strange land, and who had labored for her support in it, and still retained the same affection for her:

which is better to thee than seven sons, hath borne him: either which had been so in the time of her widowhood, as the Targum; or rather which was so now, being the wife of so rich a person, and having now brought forth a son, heir to the estate, who would be more capable of doing for her than if she had seven sons living, having no other than their paternal estate." (Gill's Exposition Commentary)

The restorer of life is also the restorer of sweetness to one whose name is sweet, but who has considered herself bitter for a long time.

The quickness of conception and birth is a blessing from God (Chesed) which reverses the punishment of ten years of bareness (unable to conceive from her original husband.) This reversal of fortune is a well-known type in Scripture. God brings down the mighty from their thrones and lifts the lowly. Ruth is the prototypical lowly person, like Tammar, Hannah, Bathsheba, and even Mary of Nazareth. She is a foreigner in a strange country, she is a widow, she has no children, she is disposed and forced to live with her mother-in-law, she is alone, and she is far away from all support systems. In this sense, she fits well within other disposed women in Scripture. Yet Compare 1 Samuel 2 to Luke 1:46-55 and you will how Ruth fits within this pattern of Chesed.



16-17 Then Naomi took the child and laid him in her bosom, and became his nurse. The women of the neighborhood gave him a name, saying, 'A son has been born to Naomi.'

"Ruth's Son is Naomi's 'redeemer,' but redemption for Naomi takes the form of a reversal of the emptiness that has embittered her. It is poetically fitting for the narrator to use the same women who observed Naomi's bitterness in 1:20-21 to assure her that the Lord has not abandoned her; the child whose conception was given by the Lord will turn Naomi's life around... Naomi's life has gone from fullness to emptiness and back to fulness again. Because Ruth, the Moabite loves her, Naomi will be "nourished" rather than empty in her old age. Clearly the women think there is more redemption than the retention of property within the family. Obed, the ancestor of Davidic kings, personified Naomi's redemption. After political kingship disappears altogether from Israel and Judah, the faithful will still look for a descendant of Obed, (a "messiah") to

become redemption incarnate for the people of God" (The New Interpreter's Bible, 941.)

We Christians believe that descendant is Jesus of Nazareth, a Messiah born of David, Obed, and Boaz/Ruth.



17b They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.

"Her neighbors gave it a name — That is, gave her advice about his name; for it did not belong to them, but to the father or mother, to name the child. They called his name Obed — That is, a servant, meaning to express their hopes that he would nourish, comfort, and assist her, duties which children owe to their progenitors. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David — For whose sake chiefly this whole book seems to have been written, that it might be certainly known from whom he was descended, the Messiah being to spring from him; which is the reason why the following genealogy is annexed for the conclusion of this book." (Benson Commentary).

It was commonly the province of the father to give the name, and sometimes his neighbors and nearest friends were called, and in their presence the name was given, and by any of them he should choose in his stead (Gill's Exposition.) See Exodus 2:10 for naming traditions. "He became the father of Jesse, the father of David." This is important information. We see the connection of David to Moab. We know David was an ally of Moab and the two nations respected each other during the time of David (1 Samuel 22:3).



The Importance of Biblical Genealogies

History, family, role, prophecy, God

- 1. Create Historical Lines: Genealogies transmit the oral history of a family from one descendant to a current carrier of the name, holder of the title, leader of the people, etc. Without these oral traditions, written history would not have been able to be recorded. These create a backstory that grounds a character within the history of the nation. In that sense, these lines are crucial to the ongoing development of Israel's history.
- 2. Highlight the importance of family and families: God's salvation history advances from one stage to the next through the work and leadership of specific families. These lists highlight the political and theological significance of these families. Not their worthiness or perfection, but the way in which God used them to advance salvation history.
- 3. To determine who could perform certain roles: The Law of Moses was very clear about responsibilities associated with the Tribe of Levy and the descendants of Aaron. Genealogies make it possible to assign those duties to the right family.
- 4. To prove prophecy: A family line often proves prophecy, specially when prognosticating that a family descendant will accomplish a particular task. Giving the person's lineage proves that the ancient prophecy was fulfilled (as in the case of Jesus of Nazareth, the son of, the son of... all the way back to David and Abraham.)
- 5. For theological reasons: This is how God has acted from generation to generation. His providential hand has guided his people from one family to the next and the next. God is with his people. God is faithful throughout all generations.



18-22 Now these are the descendants of Perez: Perez became the father of Hezron, Hezron of Ram, Ram of Amminadab, Amminadab of Nahshon, Nahshon of Salmon, Salmon of Boaz, Boaz of Obed, Obed of Jesse, and Jesse of David.

- 1. Judah has twin sons from Tamar, Zerah and Perez. Perez is the ancestor to the tribe of Judag. He has two sons too, Hezron and Hamul. According to Genesis 46:12 Hezron was one of the children from Perez who went with Judah to Egypt at the time of Joseph, but historical records have him as being born in Egypt.
- 2. Hezron had five children, of which Ram advanced the line to David. Ram was the father of Amminadab and Amminadad was the father of Nashon. Between Amminadad and Nashon there is a period of 430 years, which Is the time the nation remained in Egypt.
- 3. Chronicles and Ruth then tell us that Nashon was the father of Salmon (1 Chronicles 2). The problem here is that we know there are approximately 250 yeas between the descendant who came out of Egypt with Moses and the ancestor of Boaz. According to Matthew 1:5, Salmon married Rahab, the prostitute at the time of the invasion of Jericho. Then we hear that he was the father of Boaz (250 years later.) We also hear that Boaz is the father of Obed, then Jesse, and then David.

Numerology at the service of theological Narrative Perhaps the omission of centuries worth of descendants point to a theological point that lies beyond the narrative. Remember that genealogies only highlight the descendants who have distinguished themselves or have been used by God to advance the nation's history (Salvation history.)

"The whole chain from Perez to David consists of ten links, five of which (from Perez to Nahshon) belong to the 430 years of the sojourn in Egypt, and five (from Salmon to David) to the 476 years between the exodus from Egypt and the death of David.

This symmetrical division is apparently as intentional as the limitation of the whole genealogy to ten members, for the purpose of stamping upon it through the number ten as the seal of completeness the character of a perfect, concluded, and symmetrical whole." (Keil and Delitzsch Biblical Commentary.)



What we call Jewish history becomes "Salvation History" when we look at it from a Christian perspective. As such, it is very tempting to see the genealogy in Matthew 1 as somehow completing the genealogy given to us by Ruth and 1 Chronicles. This is proper to do, for we believe in a unified history that leads all the way to us through a common Moabite woman who took matters into her own hands, who abandoned nation and gods to become a Jewish proselyte, and who chose to come under the wings of Israel's God.

However, the Jewish Scriptures (OT) are the narrative of the historical encounter between Israel and their God over several thousand years. Those genealogies were written to document Israel's experience and Israel's history. They were not written to speak about Christ specifically. Because Messiah is to be Moshe-ben-David, we CHRISTIANS believe those chronologies give us a fuller picture of Christ, but from a Jewish point of view, those chronologies were written to document their history. We can adopt them, but we can't say they were written for us. We can use them to draw a WHOLISTIC narrative of the Messiah, but we cannot ignore the fact that they are their history and their experience, and that Ruth is pointing to David and not to Jesus. Matthew points to Jesus, Ruth points to David. This is an important distinction

Closing Prayer