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The Chapters of Ruth

Harold Willmington

Liberty University, hwillmington@liberty.edu

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Ruth

SECTION OUTLINE ONE (RUTH 1-4)

This outline covers the life of Ruth, a Moabite widow who trusts in the God of Israel and is rewarded with a new husband and child. Ruth becomes an ancestor of King David and, eventually, of the Messiah.

I. RUTH RENOUNCING (1:1-22)

- A. The famine (1:1-2): An Israelite family (Elimelech; his wife, Naomi; and their two sons) leave their home in Bethlehem to escape a famine and move to Moab.
- B. The funerals (1:3-5): Elimelech dies, and his sons marry Moabite women. Ten years later the sons die, and now Naomi and her daughters-in-law are widows.
- C. The farewells (1:6-15)
 - 1. *Naomi's decision* (1:6-7): Hearing that there is abundant food in Bethlehem, Naomi determines to return to her homeland. Both her daughters-in-law begin the journey with her.
 - 2. *Naomi's despair* (1:8-15): A bitter and broken Naomi gently urges her daughters-in-law, Orpah and Ruth, to return to Moab and begin new lives. Orpah does, but Ruth stays with Naomi.
- D. The faith (1:16-18): Ruth vows to accompany her mother-in-law and makes Naomi's God her God.
- E. The frustration (1:19-22): Arriving in Bethlehem, Naomi tells her old friends not to call her Naomi, meaning "pleasant," but to call her Mara, meaning "bitter."

II. RUTH REAPING (2:1-23)

- A. The mission of Ruth (2:1-2): Ruth volunteers to glean the leftover grain from the fields of some kindly farmer so she and Naomi have food to eat.
- B. The meeting with Boaz (2:3-17)
 - 1. *His encounter with Ruth* (2:3-13)
 - a. The circumstances (2:3-7): As Ruth sets out to gather grain, she selects a field belonging to a wealthy man named Boaz. Boaz arrives and inquires about Ruth.
 - b. The conversation (2:8-13): Boaz tells her to stay in his field and praises Ruth for her kindness to Naomi.
 - 2. *His encouragement to Ruth* (2:14-17)
 - a. The invitation (2:14): Boaz invites Ruth to eat from the food he has provided for his harvesters.
 - b. The instructions (2:15-17): Boaz instructs his workers to leave ample heads of barley in the field for Ruth!
- C. The marveling of Naomi (2:18-23): Upon returning home, Ruth tells Naomi about Boaz's kindness. Naomi blesses Boaz and tells Ruth that he is a close relative (who can marry her).

III. RUTH RESTING (3:1-18)

- A. The plan (3:1-5): Desiring to provide a home for Ruth, Naomi gives Ruth instructions for presenting herself as a potential spouse for Boaz. She sends Ruth to find Boaz at the threshing floor. Ruth is to wait until Boaz finishes his meal and lies down, and then she is to lie at his feet.
- B. The proposal (3:6-9): In the middle of the night a startled Boaz awakes to find Ruth lying at his feet! She then asks him to perform his duties as her family redeemer.
- C. The problem (3:10-13): Boaz explains to Ruth that there is another man more closely related to her than he is. If that relative won't marry Ruth, he will.
- D. The precaution (3:14): Boaz requests that Ruth stay until dawn and secretly leave, lest her mission be misinterpreted by witnesses.

- E. The provision (3:15-17): Boaz sends Ruth home with six measures of barley.
- F. The persistence (3:18): Naomi reassures Ruth that Boaz will not rest until he has followed through concerning her request.

IV. RUTH RECEIVING (4:1-22)

- A. The summons (4:1-6): At the town gate Boaz meets with the other family redeemer and 10 town leaders.
 - 1. *The rights of the family redeemer* (4:1-5): Boaz reminds the other family redeemer that he has first chance to buy Elimelech's land. The man is interested, but then Boaz adds that the buyer must also marry Ruth.
 - 2. *The refusal by the family redeemer* (4:6): The other family redeemer declines to buy the land since it would endanger his own estate.
- B. The symbol (4:7-12): The family redeemer offers Boaz the estate and validates the transaction by giving him his sandal.
- C. The son (4:13-17)
 - 1. *The fruitfulness of Ruth* (4:13): Ruth becomes Boaz's wife, and she gives birth to a son.
 - 2. *The faithfulness of God* (4:14-17): The women in Bethlehem remind Naomi of the Lord's goodness to her!
- D. The summary (4:18-22): In God's marvelous plan Boaz and Ruth become great-grandparents of King David!