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Ruth: A Study Outline

Old Testament Digest, Volume 2

From the *Old Testament Digest* of William MacDonald

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Ruth

A study outline from William MacDonald's *Old Testament Digest, Volume 2* · online: kee-ministry-library.netlify.app/.../outline/ruth

Overview of Ruth

Ruth is set in the days of the judges, a chaste story of a Gentile woman whose faith shone brightly while most of Israel wandered from the Lord. MacDonald notes that it was probably written in David's reign, and that it supplies an important link in the messianic line: Ruth the Moabitess, like Rahab before her, enters the ancestry of David and of Christ by grace. Its key word is redeem, and Boaz the kinsman-redeemer pictures Christ, while Ruth pictures the church as His bride.

Key themes

- Redemption by a near kinsman
- Grace that brings an outsider into the family of God
- Total commitment: "thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"
- God's providence in everyday events ("her hap was to light on" the field of Boaz)
- The bitterness of backsliding and the way back
- Waiting patiently while God works out His will

Christ in Ruth. Boaz, the wealthy and gracious kinsman who knew all about Ruth, provided for her, protected her and was both able and willing to redeem, is to MacDonald a type of Christ, the true Kinsman-Redeemer. The nearer kinsman who could not redeem without marring his own inheritance pictures the law, which cannot redeem those whom it condemns (Romans 8:3). The book closes with the genealogy of David, which becomes part of the greater genealogy of David's Son, the Lord Jesus (Matthew 1:5).

Read Ruth in the NET Bible: Ruth 1 · MacDonald's full commentary: Ruth in the Digest

MacDonald's Outline of Ruth

I. Sojourn in Moab (Ruth 1:1–5)
II. Return to Bethlehem (Ruth 1:6–22)
III. Ruth's association with Boaz (Ruth 2:1–3:18)
IV. Redemption by Boaz (Ruth 4:1–12)
V. Birth of Obed and genealogy to David (Ruth 4:13–22)

1 · From Moab Back to Bethlehem

Ruth 1

MacDonald follows Naomi's family into Moab and death, and Ruth's wholehearted choice to return with Naomi to Bethlehem.

I. Famine, and a family leaves the land — Ruth 1:1–2
   A. Better to stay and trust God than to go to Moab (Deuteronomy 23:3–6)
   B. The meanings of the names: Elimelech, Naomi, Mahlon, Chilion

II. Death and barrenness in Moab — Ruth 1:3–5
   A. The sons marry Moabite wives (Deuteronomy 7:1–3; Ezra 9:1–2)

III. Naomi turns homeward — Ruth 1:6–14
   A. Orpah kisses her and goes back

IV. Ruth's great confession — Ruth 1:15–18
   A. Her destination, dwelling, people, God and burial place

V. Three widows: grieving, leaving, cleaving

VI. "Call me Mara": full out, empty back — Ruth 1:19–22
   A. They arrive at the barley harvest, the season of firstfruits

CROSS REFERENCES

Deuteronomy 23:3–6 Deuteronomy 7:1–3 Ezra 9:1–2 Nehemiah 13:23–25

LESSONS

- We can go out by ourselves into paths of backsliding, but the Lord will bring us back empty, usually through bitter chastening.
- Ruth's commitment was complete, and her reward would be great.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Ruth* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Ruth 1
- *The Book of Ruth* (Dan Snaddon) — Snaddon on Ruth 1–2
- *The Collected Writings of J. N. Darby, Volume 19 (Expository 1)* (John Nelson Darby) — Darby, "Thoughts on Ruth"

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Through the Scriptures: Sunday School Lesson Outlines* (Alfred P. Gibbs)
- *The Book of Genesis* (James Gunn)
- *Abraham* (Dan Snaddon)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 1 →

2 · Gleaning in the Field of Boaz

Ruth 2

MacDonald shows Ruth led by God's providence to the field of Boaz, who treats the Gentile stranger with abundant grace.

I. The law of gleaning — Ruth 2:1–2
   A. Leave some for the poor, the stranger and the widow (Leviticus 19:9; Deuteronomy 24:19)

II. Not luck but divine arrangement — Ruth 2:3

III. Boaz's kindness to the stranger — Ruth 2:4–16
   A. Invited to stay, to drink, to eat with his reapers
   B. Handfuls left on purpose

IV. She beat out what she gleaned — Ruth 2:17

A. We must appropriate the truths we gather from the Word

V. Boaz as a picture of Christ

A. Wealthy, compassionate, knowing all about her, satisfying her need, protecting her future

VI. Naomi's counsel: stay in his fields — Ruth 2:18–23

CROSS REFERENCES

Leviticus 19:9 Leviticus 23:22 Deuteronomy 24:19

LESSONS

- We should not wander from the Lord's provision and protection into the fields of worldly pleasure.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Ruth* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Ruth 2
- *The Book of Ruth* (Dan Snaddon) — Snaddon on Ruth 2–3

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Bible Gems: Gospel Light* (Milton Haack)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)
- *Our Lord Jesus Christ, "A Plant of Renown"* (Leonard Sheldrake)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 2 →

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3 · At the Threshing Floor

Ruth 3

MacDonald explains Ruth's appeal to Boaz as kinsman-redeemer and his willing promise to act.

I. Naomi seeks rest for Ruth — Ruth 3:1–5

II. Ruth at the feet of Boaz — Ruth 3:6–9

A. The accepted custom of that day (Ezekiel 16:8)

B. "Spread thy skirt": the same word as "wings" in — Ruth 2:12

III. Boaz blesses her and promises — Ruth 3:10–13

A. A virtuous woman (Proverbs 31:10)

B. The law of the near kinsman (Deuteronomy 25:5–10)

C. A nearer kinsman has the prior claim

IV. Six measures of barley — Ruth 3:14–17

V. "Sit still, my daughter" — Ruth 3:18

CROSS REFERENCES

Ezekiel 16:8 Proverbs 31:10 Deuteronomy 25:5–10

LESSONS

- Often the hardest part of faith is waiting when nothing more can be done but let God work.
- Our salvation is settled, but the full bliss of union with Christ awaits the Bridegroom's return.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Ruth* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Ruth 3
- *The Book of Ruth* (Dan Snaddon) — Snaddon on Ruth 3

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Biblical Expositions, Lectures, Sketches of Sermons* (Henry Craik)
- *Notes on Ruth* (William Kelly)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 3 →

4 · The Kinsman Redeems

Ruth 4

MacDonald describes the transaction at the gate, Boaz's marriage to Ruth, and the birth of Obed in David's line.

I. At the gate before ten elders — Ruth 4:1–4

II. The nearer kinsman refuses — Ruth 4:5–6

- A. He would mar his own inheritance
- B. He pictures the law, which cannot redeem (Romans 8:3)
- C. His name omitted in contempt (Matthew Poole)

III. The sandal given in witness — Ruth 4:7–8

- A. Compare — Deuteronomy 25:9

IV. Boaz buys the land and takes Ruth — Ruth 4:9–12

- A. The blessing recalls Perez, born to Tamar

V. Obed born; Naomi nurses him — Ruth 4:13–17

VI. The genealogy to David — Ruth 4:18–22

- A. Part of the greater genealogy of Christ (Matthew 1)

CROSS REFERENCES

Romans 8:3 Deuteronomy 25:9 Matthew 1:5 Genesis 38

LESSONS

- Grace overrules the law's exclusion: Ruth's great-grandson became Israel's king.

RELATED READING

- *Meditations on the Book of Ruth* (H. L. Rossier) — Rossier on Ruth 4
- *The Book of Ruth* (Dan Snaddon) — Snaddon, "Boaz the Kinsman-Redeemer"

ALSO DISCUSSED IN THE LIBRARY

- *Life of Christ* (Gordon Franz)
- *Our Lord Jesus Christ, "A Plant of Renown"* (Leonard Sheldrake)
- *Proverbs* (H. A. Ironside)

Read MacDonald on Chapter 4 →

Further reading on Ruth

In the Faithful Men Library

- *The Book of Ruth* (Dan Snaddon)
- *Meditations on the Book of Ruth* (H. L. Rossier)
- *Notes on Ruth* (William Kelly)
- *Articles by F. W. Grant* (F. W. Grant)
- *From the Editor's Notebook: The Historical Books* (W. Ross Rainey)
- *Synopsis of the Books of the Bible, Volume 1: Genesis to 2 Chronicles* (John Nelson Darby)

On plymouthbrethren.org

- "Ruth" (William Kelly, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Ruth" (John Nelson Darby, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Thoughts On Ruth" (John Nelson Darby, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "Ruth from "The Numerical Bible"" (F. W. Grant, plymouthbrethren.org)
- "From The Editor's Notebook: Historical Books, Ruth" (W. Ross Rainey, From the Editor's Notebook, plymouthbrethren.org)

Every library book that cites Ruth: Scripture index — Ruth

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