

RUTH - A STUDY GUIDE

THE CENTRAL QUESTION:

What does this book/story say to us about God?

This question may be broken down further as follows:

- a. Why did God do it/allow it?
 - b. Why did He record it for our study?
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1. What picture of God would you have if you had only the book of Ruth? What is the historical background of this book? Who do you think wrote the book? Why was it written?
2. Ruth was a Moabitess. Where did the Moabites come from? (Genesis 19:30-38) What relationship were Israel to have with the Moabites? (Deuteronomy 23:3-6; Nehemiah 13:1,2) Balak, one of the kings of Moab, tried to overcome Israel by paying Balaam to curse them. (Numbers 22-25) There was constant warfare between Israel and Moab for many years. (Judges 3:12-30; 2 Samuel 8:2,11,12; 1 Chronicles 18:2,11; 2 Kings 1:1; 3:4-27) The prophets spoke bitterly against Moab. (Isaiah 15,16; 25:10; Jeremiah 9:25,26; 25:17,21; 48:1-46; Ezekiel 25:8-11; Amos 2:1,2; Zephaniah 2:8-11)
3. Why do you think the book of Ruth was included in the Canon? (Ruth 4:17-22) When did the events of this book occur? (Ruth 1:1-2)
4. Why did some of "God's true people" have to flee to the heathen to find food to eat? (Ruth 1:2) Why do you suppose the famine came?
5. Was Naomi (Mara) right that the Lord had dealt very bitterly with her? (Ruth 1:20,21) How about Job when he said, "The Lord gave, and now the Lord has taken away"? (Job 1:21, GNB; Compare 2 Samuel 24:1 in contrast with 1 Chronicles 21:1) Isn't it clear from Job 1:12-19 that Satan was the one who "took away"? Was this a serious error on Job's part? (Job 1:22) Or was he speaking as they understood things in those days? When someone has a horrible accident we sometimes say, "It must have been God's will." Are death and sickness ever God's will?
6. Why did Ruth become so devoted to Naomi her mother-in-law? (Ruth 1:6-18)
7. What do Boaz's statements to Ruth imply about conditions in those days? (Ruth 2:8,9; Compare 2:22)
8. Why do you think Boaz took such an interest in Ruth? (Ruth 2:4-7,10-16)
9. Would you want your daughter to do what Ruth did in Ruth 3? Should we recommend this for our academics and colleges?
10. Why is there such a detailed telling of the negotiations for buying Elimelech's property? (Ruth 4:12)
11. Do you think the Levirate marriage rule should be followed today? Why, or why not? Apparently it was still followed in the times of Christ. (Deuteronomy 25:5-10; Matthew 22:23-28; compare Leviticus 18:16; 20:21)

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