

# Ruth

## Who is the author of Ruth?

The bible doesn't present any proof of the author. Jewish history attributes Ruth to the prophet Samuel. Swindoll's commentary agrees with this along with John Gill (*biblestudytools.com*). Other possible authors that have been suggested are Gad, Nathan, Hezekiah, and Ezra.

## When was Ruth written?

Varying sources estimate between 1046 and 931 but Samuel was the last of the Judges and according to John Gill's exposition (*biblestudytools.com*) lived from 1056 to 1004 BC. If we accept these approximate dates it would seem Ruth was written in the late 1000's BC.

That said there is much disagreement on the dates of Samuels life, the times of the Judges and time of Ruth.

## What was the time and setting for the book?

The book took place in Israel (Bethlehem of Judah) and Moab during the time of the Judges. At the time Israel was a theocracy and God had appointed judges to rule over the people.

Moab was a gentile land and worshipped pagan gods such as Chemosh and others. Moab was cursed by God and, consequently, Ruth, being a Moabite, was under that curse. Moab was cursed by God, because Moab rejected the true and living God. Moab was an idolatrous nation, and Moab was the perennial enemy of Israel. That nation was constantly hostile to the people of God and to God. Moab was actually formed when Lot...you remember the brother of Abraham...had a child... Genesis 19:37...named Moab.

Elimelech sojourned to Moab with his family due to a famine in Judah as he heard there was food there.

### **Who was it written to?**

Ruth was written to the Israelites.

### **Who are the main characters in the book? How old are they? What do we know about them?**

**Elimelech** a Jew of Israel from Bethlehem Ephratah in Judah. Name means “my God is King” which indicates he was a follower of the Lord of Israel.

**Naomi** a Jew of Israel from Bethlehem Ephratah in Judah. Name means sweet, pleasant. Naomi is being selfless in imploring her daughters in law to stay in Moab with their families and in Ch1 V 12-13 seems to imply that she is beyond child bearing age and even if she could the children would be too young for Ruth and Orpah.

**Ruth** Name means beautiful, of good aspect. Ruth is a Moabite woman who became the wife of Mahlon and has no children by Mahlon.

**Boaz** a Jew of Israel from Bethlehem Ephratah in Judah. is a close relative of Elimelech but not the closest. Boaz is a wealthy land owner and farmer. Boaz is respectful of the closer relative’s right to be the redeemer of Elimelech’s and Mahlon’s inheritance including Ruth and asks him first before becoming the kinsman redeemer.

Elimelech’s closer relative than Boaz. He was asked if he wanted to redeem the land of Elimelech and marry Ruth widow of Mahlon but gave his right to Boaz.

**Obed** the son of Ruth and Boaz and ancestor of David and Jesus Christ.

**What do you think the purpose and theme of Ruth is? What words describe the lessons that are taught by Ruth, Boaz, or Naomi?**

Teaching lessons of :

Examples of :

**What did Ruth see in Naomi that led her to accept the people and God of Israel? And to promise to live with her till death?**

**What caused Ruth to glean in the fields? Boaz field?**

Gleaning in this context is gathering what was left of the harvest after the main harvesters are finished.

Gleaning is the custom of following a harvest so that what remains might be used primarily for the poor who have little or no means of supporting themselves. These disenfranchised people are often the widows and the elderly who have lost their husbands or relatives due to death or abandonment and have no other way to survive. There was a law of God that commanded this such as in Leviticus 19:9 which says *“When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, neither shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest.”*

The reason for this is further expounded in Leviticus 23:22 *“And when you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not reap your field right up to its edge, nor shall you gather the gleanings after your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the sojourner: I am the Lord your God.”*

## **Ruth new testament references**

Mat 1:5 chronicles Ruth and Obed in the line of Christ.

Luke 3:32 mentions Obed in the line of Christ.

1Ti 5:3 Honor widows who are widows indeed;

1Ti 5:4 but if any widow has children or grandchildren, they must first learn to practice piety in regard to their own family and to make some return to their parents; for this is acceptable in the sight of God.

**What is the significance of the sojourn in 1:1?**

**What were the afflictions of Naomi and how did she feel about them ?**

**What did Boaz tell Ruth when he met her in the fields the first time?**

**Why did he tell her this?**

**Only glean in the fields owned by Boaz. Why did he tell her this?**

**What was the purpose of Naomi telling Ruth to go to Boaz at night and lay at his feet?**

**Then later when he discovered her there she asked him to spread his covering over her and told him he was a close relative. What is the significance of this act?**

**Why did Boaz want to keep her visit a secret?**

**Why did Naomi tell Ruth to wait to see how the matter turned out?**

**What was meant by the women in ch 4 v 11 saying “may the woman be like Rachel and Leah”? And further in v 12 “ like the house of Perez whom Tamar bore to Judah through the offspring...”**

**What was the fate of Naomi at the end of her trials in the book?**

**What parallels can we draw from the reference to the “Kinsman-redeemer” in Ruth?**

Heb 2:11, 17 Heb 4:14-16 These passages identify Christ as our Kinsman-redeemer.