

## Ruth – The quintessential Old Testament Book

What are some characteristics of the Book of Ruth? What is the main underlying theme? In what way does this book carry forward the Bible's story?

### "The LORD has afflicted me"

#### **Ruth 1:19-22**

So the two of them journeyed together until they arrived in Bethlehem. When they entered Bethlehem, the whole village was excited about their arrival. The women of the village said, "Can this be Naomi?" But she replied to them, "Don't call me 'Naomi'! Call me 'Mara' because the Sovereign One has treated me very harshly. I left here full, but the Lord has caused me to return empty-handed. Why do you call me 'Naomi,' seeing that the Lord has opposed me, and the Sovereign One has caused me to suffer?" So Naomi returned, accompanied by her Moabite daughter-in-law Ruth, who came back with her from the region of Moab. (Now they arrived in Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest.)

Is there anything in Naomi's statement that could be considered good or admirable? Is there anything wrong with her statement?

#### **Job 1:12-21; 2:6-9**

(1:12) So the Lord said to Satan, "All right then, everything he has is in your power. Only do not extend your hand against the man himself!" So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord.

Now the day came when Job's sons and daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and a messenger came to Job, saying, "The oxen were plowing and the donkeys were grazing beside them, and the Sabeans swooped down and carried them all away, and they killed the servants with the sword! And I – only I alone – escaped to tell you!"

While this one was still speaking, another messenger arrived and said, "The fire of God has fallen from heaven and has burned up the sheep and the servants – it has consumed them! And I – only I alone – escaped to tell you!"

While this one was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, "The Chaldeans formed three bands and made a raid on the camels and carried them all away, and they killed the servants with the sword! And I – only I alone – escaped to tell you!"

While this one was still speaking another messenger arrived and said, "Your sons and your daughters were eating and drinking wine in their oldest brother's house, and suddenly a great wind swept across the wilderness and struck the four corners of the house, and it fell on the young people, and they died! And I – only I alone – escaped to tell you!"

Then Job got up and tore his robe. He shaved his head, and then he threw himself down with his face to the ground. He said, "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked I will return there. The Lord gives, and the Lord takes away. May the name of the Lord be blessed!" In all this Job did not sin, nor did he charge God with moral impropriety....

(2:6)...So the Lord said to Satan, "All right, he is in your power; only preserve his life."

So Satan went out from the presence of the Lord, and he afflicted Job with a malignant ulcer from the sole of his feet to the top of his head. Job took a shard of broken pottery to scrape himself with while he was sitting among the ashes. Then his wife said to him, "Are you still holding firmly to your integrity? Curse God, and die!"

But he replied, "You're talking like one of the godless women would do! Should we receive what is good from God, and not also receive what is evil?" In all this Job did not sin by what he said.

**Gen 37:26-30; 50:18-21**

(37:26) Then Judah said to his brothers, “What profit is there if we kill our brother and cover up his blood? Come, let’s sell him to the Ishmaelites, but let’s not lay a hand on him, for after all, he is our brother, our own flesh.” His brothers agreed. So when the Midianite merchants passed by, Joseph’s brothers pulled him out of the cistern and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. The Ishmaelites then took Joseph to Egypt. Later Reuben returned to the cistern to find that Joseph was not in it! He tore his clothes, returned to his brothers, and said, “The boy isn’t there! And I, where can I go?”...

(50:18)...Then his brothers also came and threw themselves down before him; they said, “Here we are; we are your slaves.” But Joseph answered them, “Don’t be afraid. Am I in the place of God? As for you, you meant to harm me, but God intended it for a good purpose, so he could preserve the lives of many people, as you can see this day. So now, don’t be afraid. I will provide for you and your little children.” Then he consoled them and spoke kindly to them.

What can the stories of Naomi, Job, and Joseph teach us about God working out His purposes in the lives of His people? What practical significance could this have for those who are seeking to understand and live out God’s plan and His will for their lives?

*Hesed in Life Group Community*

Are we a place where people can come and speak honestly, even exaggeratingly, about their pain?

In what ways can we be someone’s Ruth? That is, putting our comfort and our own selves at risk for the sake of showing hesed to others?

## Hesed in Hospitality

### **Deut 24:19-22**

Whenever you reap your harvest in your field and leave some unraked grain there, you must not return to get it; it should go to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow so that the Lord your God may bless all the work you do. When you beat your olive tree you must not repeat the procedure; the remaining olives belong to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow. When you gather the grapes of your vineyard you must not do so a second time; they should go to the resident foreigner, orphan, and widow. Remember that you were slaves in the land of Egypt; therefore, I am commanding you to do all this.

### **Ruth 2:4-9**

Now at that very moment, Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “May the Lord be with you!” They replied, “May the Lord bless you!” Boaz asked his servant in charge of the harvesters, “To whom does this young woman belong?” The servant in charge of the harvesters replied, “She’s the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the region of Moab. She asked, ‘May I follow the harvesters and gather grain among the bundles?’ Since she arrived she has been working hard from this morning until now – except for sitting in the resting hut a short time.”

So Boaz said to Ruth, “Listen carefully, my dear! Do not leave to gather grain in another field. You need not go beyond the limits of this field. You may go along beside my female workers. Take note of the field where the men are harvesting and follow behind with the female workers. I will tell the men to leave you alone. When you are thirsty, you may go to the water jars and drink some of the water the servants draw.”

### **Luke 14:12-14**

He said also to the man who had invited him, “When you host a dinner or a banquet, don’t invite your friends or your brothers or your relatives or rich neighbors so you can be invited by them in return and get repaid. But when you host an elaborate meal, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. Then you will be blessed, because they cannot repay you, for you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.”

### **Romans 12:13-16**

Contribute to the needs of the saints, pursue hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another; do not be haughty but associate with the lowly. Do not be conceited.

What would be a modern day application of the gleaning that took place in those days?

In what way does our culture make showing hospitality difficult? How can this be overcome?