

Ruth

Women of Faith and Courage · Women of the Bible

A Moabite widow who chose Israel's God over her own people and homeland, Ruth's account stands as one of Scripture's most beautiful demonstrations of covenant love and sovereign providence. Born in Moab—a nation excluded from Israel's assembly due to their opposition during the Exodus—she married an Israelite during the time of the judges when "every man did that which was right in his own eyes." After her husband's death left her childless, she faced the choice of returning to her people and gods or following her mother-in-law Naomi back to Bethlehem in poverty and uncertainty.

Her declaration of loyalty—"Intreat me not to leave thee... thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God"—represents one of Scripture's clearest expressions of genuine conversion, choosing covenant faithfulness over ease and security. Arriving in Bethlehem at barley harvest, she providentially gleaned in the field of Boaz, a kinsman of her deceased father-in-law. Through Naomi's guidance and Boaz's redemptive kindness, Ruth's faith and virtue led to her marriage to Boaz, producing Obed, grandfather of King David.

Thus a Moabite woman entered Christ's genealogy (Matthew 1:5), demonstrating that God's grace transcends ethnic boundaries and that faith, not bloodline, determines inclusion in His purposes. The book bearing her name reveals God's tender care for the afflicted and His sovereign orchestration of seemingly random events to accomplish His redemptive plan.

Note: The Hebrew word *hesed* (covenant love/lovingkindness) appears prominently in Ruth's account, describing Ruth's loyalty to Naomi, Boaz's kindness to Ruth, and ultimately God's faithfulness to all. Boaz's role as kinsman-redeemer (*goel*) typologically prefigures Christ's redemptive work. The timing—

harvest season, threshing floor, midnight—creates a carefully structured narrative demonstrating divine providence in life's ordinary details.

Key Verses

Ruth 1:16

And Ruth said, Intreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go; and where thou lodgest, I will lodge: thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God:

Ruth 2:12

The LORD recompense thy work, and a full reward be given thee of the LORD God of Israel, under whose wings thou art come to trust.

Ruth 3:11

And now, my daughter, fear not; I will do to thee all that thou requirest: for all the city of my people doth know that thou art a virtuous woman.

Ruth 4:13

So Boaz took Ruth, and she was his wife: and when he went in unto her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bare a son.

Matthew 1:5

And Salmon begat Booz of Rachab; and Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

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