



Ruth—Ruth 1-4

The story of Ruth is likely more familiar than those of Tamar and Rahab. Ruth was married to one of Naomi's sons. She was a Moabite (Moab was the son of Lot) who married Naomi's son while they were in Moab due to a famine in Israel. Before Naomi is able to return home, her husband and both sons die, leaving her a widow in a foreign land along with the widows of her two sons. Out of respect for these young women, Naomi releases both Ruth and Orpah (her other son's widow) to return to their families rather than remain bound to her and her care.

Ruth would hear nothing of it making her famous statement in Ruth 1:16-17 "Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you." Ruth returns to Israel with Naomi. The custom of Levirate marriage enters into play once again, but this time with a helpful nudge on Naomi's part.

Boaz was a relative of her husband, but not the closest relative. Naomi, however, sees Boaz as the best match for her daughter-in-law. She instructs Ruth to glean in Boaz's fields and in so doing catches the eye of Boaz. In time Ruth is coached by Naomi in how to appeal to Boaz to convince him to redeem her for his own, which he does.

Boaz and Ruth go on to become parents to Obed, who in turn becomes the father of Jesse, who we know as the father of David, the future king of Israel and ancestor of Jesus the Messiah.

Thoughts for Reflection

Read Ruth 1-4. How can you see Ruth making a dedicated effort to truly make Naomi's people her own and her God her own?

What can we learn about God's use of Ruth in bringing forth the Messiah and Matthew's inclusion of her in his genealogy of Jesus?

16 But Ruth said,

"Do not urge me to leave you or to return from following you. For where you go I will go, and where you lodge I will lodge. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. 17 Where you die I will die, and there will I be buried. May the Lord do so to me and more also if anything but death parts me from you."

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