



Ruth

A 6-WEEK INDUCTIVE STUDY

SCRIPTURE PATHS BIBLE STUDIES

By Lisa Hughes

Ruth

Lesson #1, Introduction to the Book

Welcome to this study on the book of Ruth! There are so many wonderful truths we can glean here from God's Word, so that's why I have a few helpful hints for you as you get started.

- First, read through the book of Ruth *before* beginning this lesson.
- Second, *using only your Bible*, try to answer the questions in this lesson using clues and information found in the book of Ruth. (Be sure to include Scripture references to support the answers you find). At this point, using only your Bible, you may not be able to answer some of the questions below.
- Third, once you've completed the questions to the best of your ability, you can now consult a Bible dictionary, Bible commentary, or a Study Bible and add to each of the questions below with the extra information you discover.

Ready? Let's get started!

1. Who wrote the book of Ruth?
2. When was the book of Ruth written?
3. Where was it written?
4. To whom was the book written?
5. Where do the events of the book take place?
6. What do you learn about Ruth herself from this book?
7. What do you learn about Naomi?
8. What do you learn about Boaz?

9. What was the country of Israel like at this point in its history?
10. What are the main points of the story covered in the book?
11. What are the main themes in the book?
12. What was the author's purpose for writing the book of Ruth?
13. What attributes about God do you notice in this book?
14. Write down any interesting facts you discovered about the book of Ruth from your Bible or outside reading.

TRIVIA

- RUTH IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT NAMED AFTER AN ANCESTOR OF JESUS.
- RUTH IS THE ONLY BOOK IN THE OLD TESTAMENT NAMED AFTER A NON-JEWISH PERSON.
- THIS BOOK IS ONE OF TWO BOOKS IN THE BIBLE NAMED AFTER A WOMAN.
- MANY BELIEVE THAT RUTH'S NAME MEANS "FRIENDSHIP."
(TAKEN FROM MACARTHUR'S QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE TO THE BIBLE.)

Ruth

Lesson #2 – Overview of the Book

The purpose of this lesson is to familiarize you with the structure and focus of the book of Ruth. This is an important step in Bible study we're often tempted to rush through, yet you'll be so glad you took the time to do this lesson. Take two weeks to work on this lesson if you feel overwhelmed by its length. Think of this lesson as flying over the book at a few thousand feet so you get a feel for the landscape. Next week, we'll zoom in closer, but for now enjoy the view!

CHAPTER 1

1. Read Chapter 1. Now, briefly record the events of Chapter 1.
2. Who are the main characters in Chapter 1?
3. Where does the action take place?
4. What is the theme (the main idea) of Chapter 1?
5. List any historical or cultural customs the characters engage in.
6. What do you learn about God in this chapter? Is He mentioned? What acts do you see Him performing? How do the characters in the chapter regard him?

CHAPTER 2

7. Read Chapter 2. Record the events of Chapter 2.
8. Who are the main characters in Chapter 2?
9. Where does the action take place?
10. What is the theme of Chapter 2?

11. List any historical or cultural customs the characters engage in.
12. What do you learn about God in this chapter? Is He mentioned? What acts do you see Him performing? How do the characters in the chapter regard him?

CHAPTER 3

13. Read Chapter 3. Record the events of Chapter 3.
14. Who are the main characters in Chapter 3?
15. Where does the action take place?
16. What is the theme of Chapter 3?
17. List any historical or cultural customs the characters engage in.
18. What do you learn about God in this chapter? Is He mentioned? What acts do you see Him performing? How is He regarded by the characters in the chapter?

CHAPTER 4

19. Read Chapter 4. Record the events of Chapter 4.
20. Who are the main characters in Chapter 4?
21. Where does the action take place?
22. What is the theme of Chapter 4?
23. List any historical or cultural customs the characters engage in.

24. What do you learn about God in this chapter? Is He mentioned? What acts do you see Him performing? How do the characters in the chapter regard him?

SUMMARIZING

25. Looking at the *whole* book of Ruth. Who are the main characters in the book of Ruth?
26. What is the main theme of the *whole* book of Ruth? Make sure you look over each of the chapter themes to help you formulate your answer.
27. What have you learned about God and His ways in this book?
28. What is the main purpose for the book of Ruth to be included in the Bible? See Ruth 4:18-22 and Matthew 1:1-16.

Ruth

Lesson #3 – Chapter 1

Read through Chapter 1 before beginning this lesson.

1. When does the story of Ruth take place (vs. 1)?
2. To gain insight into the time period in which Ruth takes place, read Judges chapter 2 and 21:25. What do you learn about the nation of Israel at that time?
3. Why did the man leave Bethlehem to go to Moab (vs. 1)? Who did he take with him (vss. 1-2)?
4. What do you learn about the Ephrathites from Gen. 35:16, 19; 48:7; and 1 Sam. 17:12?
5. When a famine occurred in the land of Israel what things can you surmise? See Deut. 28:45-48 and 29:22-28 to formulate your answer. How does that support what you learned about the spiritual state of the people from question #2?
6. What interesting facts do you know about Moab? For starters see Gen. 19:36-37; Deut. 34:5; Josh. 13:32. A Bible dictionary/encyclopedia, a commentary on Ruth, or your Study Bible notes would also be a good place to look.
7. What happened to the family after arriving in Moab (vss. 3-5)? How long were they in Moab (vs. 4)?
8. Elimelech tried to escape from the lessons God intended to teach him. Remember, God sent the famine for a purpose. What lessons might Elimelech have learned had he stayed in Israel?

9. We all have been tempted to flee from the life lessons God wants to teach us. Why is it important to submit to God and learn the lessons He means to teach us?
10. Why did Naomi leave Moab and return to Israel (vs. 6)? What does this change in Israel tell you about the possible spiritual state of the nation by then?
11. What were Naomi's daughters-in-law willing to do (vss. 7, 10)? What was Naomi's response to them (vss. 8-9, 11-13)?
12. What can you observe about the relationship Naomi and her daughters-in-law shared?
13. How did these women react to her plea that they stay in Moab (vss. 14-15)?
14. What commitment does Ruth make to Naomi in vss. 16-18?
15. How does the village of Bethlehem react to Naomi's homecoming (vs. 19)?
16. How does Naomi recount the events in her life in vss. 20-21?
17. Job's wife in Job 2:7-10 is another woman who underwent some severe trials. How were Naomi and Job's wife's responses similar and different from each other?
18. What is the core problem of Naomi and Job's wife's responses to God and their life situation?
19. When are you tempted to view God in this way? What helps you to overcome thinking this way?

20. Naomi's eyes were set on the past instead of the future God was unfolding for her. What did Naomi know about God that had been taught to her since childhood that should have given her comfort? See Ex. 15:2-3, 11-13; Deut. 10:12-21; 32:39.
21. We have the added benefit of God's completed revelation to aid us when trouble comes upon us and we need help thinking properly about our situation. How do the Scriptures assist us in thinking correctly about the trials in our lives? See Job 2:10; Ps. 119:67, 71, 75; 138:6-8; Lam. 3:19-33; Phil. 3:13-14; 4:8-9.
22. Verse 22 provides a little summary of Naomi's arrival in Bethlehem. Naomi's life looked very different upon her return to Bethlehem than it did when she left. Like Naomi, sometimes we have trouble reconciling with the changes in our lives when they no longer match up to the pictures we have in our heads of what life is supposed to look like. What are some steps you could take to begin the process of being thankful for the "new" life God has given you if you find yourself in a situation like this?
23. Who is the main character in Ch. 1? How would you describe that person from the details in this chapter?
24. What picture of God is presented in this chapter?
25. What lessons of encouragement or caution have you gleaned from this chapter?

Ruth

Lesson #4 – Chapter 2

Read through Chapter 2 before beginning this lesson.

1. In a storybook, vs. 1 would be spoken by the narrator to give us a hint that the man described there will play a prominent role in Naomi's story. What details are given about Naomi's relative in vs. 1?
2. What does Ruth desire to do (vss. 2-3)? What do you learn from Lev. 23:22 and Deut. 24:19-22 about this practice?
3. As Boaz surveys the barley harvest, what report is he given concerning Ruth (vss. 4-7)?
4. After Boaz learns Ruth's identity from his servant, how does he show his willingness to extend care to Ruth and Naomi (vss. 8-9)?
5. What is Ruth's reaction to his thoughtfulness (vs. 10)?
6. What reasons does Boaz give for extending kindness to her in vss. 11-12?
7. How were Boaz's kind words and actions a balm to Ruth (vs. 13)?
8. Boaz's words paint a beautiful picture of God in vs. 12. What aspects of God's character are revealed in vs. 12?
9. Boaz speaks of Ruth finding refuge under God's wings. Matt. 23:37 helps explain what it means. What do you learn?
10. Look up the following verses: Ps. 17:8; 36:7; 57:1; 61:4; 63:7; 91:4. What do you need to know about God and then apply to your life according to these verses?

11. What further ways does Boaz protect Ruth in vss. 14-16?
12. After gleaning all day how much barley did Ruth take home to Naomi (vs. 17)? About how much is that today?
13. What was Naomi's response to the events of Ruth's day (vss. 18-23)?
14. What additional fact does Naomi reveal about Boaz in vs. 20?
15. How did God use Boaz to protect and provide for the two widows in Ch. 2?
16. Who are the main characters in Ch. 2?
17. What godly character qualities about those people are presented in this chapter?
18. What picture of God is presented in this chapter?
19. Look up the following Scriptures to add details to the picture of God as a protector and provider. See Deut. 10:17-18; 27:19; Ps. 146:9; 147:6; James 1:27.
20. In vs. 20 Naomi begins to see God's kindness directed toward her instead of seeing only judgment. What events had taken place in this chapter that convinced her of God's intended good toward her?
21. What events in your life point to God's kindness extended toward you?

Ruth

Lesson #5 – Chapter 3

Read through Chapter 3 before beginning this lesson.

1. What offer does Naomi make to Ruth (vs. 1)?
2. What kind of *security* (KJV *rest*; NIV *a home*) does Naomi want for Ruth and with whom (vss. 1-2)?
3. What is Naomi's plan for finding security for Ruth in vss. 3-4?
4. How does Ruth respond to this proposal? See vss. 5-6.
5. In what way do Ruth's actions here reveal the commitment she made to Naomi in 1:16-17?
6. Ruth follows Naomi's plan and goes to the threshing floor. How does she explain her presence there when Boaz finds her in the middle of the night (vs. 9)?
7. *The New Treasury of Scripture Knowledge* notes the phrase from vs. 9 *spread your covering* literally means "to spread your wing" which was an emblem of protection. It also states that even in more modern times when a Jew married a woman he would throw the skirts of his robes over her to signify he had taken her under his protection. What is Ruth asking Boaz to do and why? See also 3:1.
8. How is Boaz an answer to his own prayer for Ruth? See 2:12 and 3:9.

9. What is the significance of Boaz being a *close relative* (KJV *near kinsman*; NIV *kinsman-redeemer*)? Why was this relationship so important to the Israelites? See Deut. 25:5-10 and Num. 27:1-10.
10. What does Boaz think of being the object of Ruth's proposal (vss. 10-11)? How does he regard Ruth?
11. What term does Boaz use when he speaks to Ruth in vss. 10-11? What does that term reveal about the purity of their relationship and their seasons of life?
12. Boaz tells Ruth she is regarded as a woman of excellence. What character qualities have you observed about Ruth from Chapters 1-3 that show she is indeed a woman of virtue and excellence?
13. The same terms that are used to describe Ruth as a woman of excellence are also used to describe Boaz in 2:1 (literally *a man of valor*). What qualities have you observed about Boaz that reveal the caliber of his character?
14. Though Boaz agrees to Ruth's request, he reveals a problem. What is it (vss. 12-13)?
15. What measures does Boaz take to protect Ruth from gossip and to show her kindness in vss. 14-17?
16. What is Naomi's counsel to Ruth in vs. 18?
17. Both Ruth and Boaz are described as people with excellent character. How is character built into the heart and life of a person? See Prov. 1:1-7; 2:1-22.
18. Someone once said to do great things well you must start with the little things and do them well also. Describe the process of taking care of the little things in your character so you can be described as a woman of excellence.

19. Though Ruth may have experienced fear and nervousness at asking Boaz to be her kinsman-redeemer, we don't see it in her actions. Explain how Ruth's actions show she put her trust in the God of Israel, under whose wings she had come to seek refuge.

20. Choose 1 passage from the Bible that comforts you when you are afraid. Explain how those truths help you to move from fear and worry to trust and obedience.

Ruth

Lesson #6 – Chapter 4

Read through Chapter 4 before beginning this lesson.

Chapter 4 brings together two main issues that are at work here in this story: the importance of passing on the family line (keeping a name in Israel) and the importance of keeping the land inheritance that is passed down from father to son. When Naomi's husband Elimelech died, his land inheritance passed on to his sons who bore his name. However, when they both died, not only was the family name destined to die out, but also the land inheritance would be passed on to whoever bought it. That is why Naomi sought out Boaz as a close relative to redeem the land and to marry Ruth, thereby ensuring that Elimelech's name *and* land inheritance would at least stay in the family. We must remember that for the Israelites, living in the land and passing on the inheritance to the next generation was the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. When the Israelites were slaves in Egypt, and then later when they wandered in the desert for 40 years, they looked forward to the day when they would live in the land God had promised to give them. Living in the land and maintaining a name in the land was a vital part of their relationship with God.

1. In 3:18 Naomi encourages Ruth with the words, "Wait, my daughter, until you know how the matter turns out; for the man will not rest until he has settled it today." As Chap. 4 opens what do we see Boaz doing (vss. 1-2)?
2. What is the first piece of business that Boaz broaches with the close relative (who remains unnamed) and the elders of the city in vss. 3-4? See Lev. 25:25, which explains the reason why Naomi, with no husband or sons to provide for her, needed to sell the land.
3. What does the close relative think of the business proposal (vs. 4)?
4. What next piece of business does Boaz bring up in vs. 5? How does the close relative react to this information (vs. 6)? Why?
5. The deal is closed! What custom do they follow to formalize the pact (vs. 7-8)?

6. Before the elders, Boaz publicly states his intentions and motives concerning Naomi and Ruth. What details does he give in vss. 9-10?
7. The elders of the city pronounce 3 blessings upon Boaz for the kindness he has shown to Naomi (vss. 11-12). What was the first blessing they gave Boaz?
8. Who were Rachel and Leah and how did they build the nation of Israel? See Gen. 28:13-14; 29:31-30:24; 35:18; Ex. 1:1-7.
9. How did the second blessing the elders give become a reality? See Ruth 4:17 and Matt. 1:6, 16.
10. Vs. 12 contains the details of the third blessing. Who is Perez and what are the circumstances surrounding his birth? Also trace his connection to Bethlehem. See Gen. 38:6-30; 1 Chron. 2:5, 18, 50-54; Ruth 4:18-22.
11. As you read vs. 13 what truths about God are you reminded of? See also Gen. 21:1-3; 25:21; 30:22; Ps. 113:9; and 127:3.
12. How can those truths about God be a comfort to those with and without children?
13. What words of encouragement do the women of Bethlehem have for Naomi upon the birth of her grandson? See vss. 14-15.
14. What privileged role will Naomi play in the next phase of her life? See vs. 16.
15. In vss. 16-17 we see Naomi's spiritual and emotional restoration made complete. When we first meet her in Ch. 1 she is bitter about the state of her life, but through the love and care of Ruth and the unfolding of God's provision for her we see her now in Ch. 4 as a useful and blessed member of the community. What lessons can you learn from Naomi's life that can help you as you live out your own life?

16. Vss. 18-22 lists the genealogy of Boaz's family. How is this simple little family tree important to the rest of the Bible? (See Matt. 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-38).

17. Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz had no way of knowing how God would use them to shape future events that He had planned. They were just living their lives and trying to be faithful to the God they loved and followed. We too have no way of knowing the significance of our lives or how God may use them for His purposes. How can Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz be an example to us of faithfulness, trusting God, and doing what is right without knowing the big picture for our lives?

18. God often moves on a timetable different than our own, but this book reminds us that He does move and work in our lives to bring us to the exact place He intends for us to be. How can this book be an encouragement to you to wait upon God's timing in your life?

19. Remember that the book of Ruth takes place during the times of the judges which is described in Judges 21:25 as a time when everyone did what was right in his own eyes. Yet in the book of Ruth, we have the example of Boaz and Ruth who did not follow what the rest of the nation was doing, but instead did what was right in God's eyes. How is that a motivation for you to live your life faithfully to God in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation?