

Introduction to the book of Ruth

Timing of the book

- 1) God used the judges in Israel for @ 450 years (Acts 13:20)
 - a) The book of Judges was probably written @ 1000 BC.
- 2) The events of this book:
 - a) Perhaps @ 1200-1150 BC during the time of the judge Gideon (Judges 6)
 - b) Perhaps @ 1126-1105 BC during the time of Jair (Judges 10:3-5).

Contrasted with the book of Judges

(parallels observed by Dr. Arnold Fruchtenbaum)

Judges	Ruth
Highlights immorality	Highlights fidelity, righteousness, and purity
Portray idolatry	Portrays worship of the one true God
Shows decline and disloyalty	Shows devotion
Reveals lust	Reveals love
Shows war	Shows peace
Shows disobedience leading to judgment	Shows obedience leading to blessing
Shows spiritual darkness	Shows spiritual light

Background to the book

- 1) The people of Moab worshiped the false god Chemosh (Numbers 21:29; Ruth 1:15), which included human sacrifice (2nd Kings 3:26-27). They also worshiped Ashtar, the wife of Chemosh.
- 2) Moab controlled Israel for nearly 20 years before the judge Ehud (1316-1237 BC) (cf. Judges 3)
- 3) Israel harvested their barley and wheat from mid-March to mid-April, during the time of the latter rains (1:22; 2:21, 23).
 - a) This is part of the reason why this book is read in the synagogues during Pentecost.
 - b) A Jewish tradition states the King David was born and died on the day of Pentecost.
- 4) Ruth's character described in 3:11 [*ishshah chayil*] is directly parallel to the description of the excellent wife in Proverbs 12:4 and 31:10.

Uniquities of the book:

- 1) Fifty-five of the eighty-six verses of the book record conversations.
 - 2) Note the contrasts:
 - a) Between Ruth's response and that of her sister-in-law Orpah
 - b) Between Boaz's attitude and actions and that of his unnamed relative
 - 3) Note the genealogy in 4:18-22
 - a) The first 5 names (Perez, Hezron, Ram, Amminadab, and Nashon) are pre-Exodus
 - b) The last 5 names (Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, and David) are post-Exodus
 - 4) Each chapter appears to have a theme word/concept:
 - a) Chapter 1: *return* (1:6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 15, 16, 21, 22)
 - b) Chapter 2: *glean* (2:2, 3, 7, 8, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 23)
 - c) Chapter 3: *threshing floor* (3:2, 3, 6, 14)
- Chapter 4: *redeem* (4:1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 14), *buy* (3:4, 5, 8, 9, 10)