

## Ruth - Handout #1

Ruth is one of the two books of the bible named for women (the other is Esther). The authorship is unknown but Jewish tradition gives credit to the prophet Samuel (If this is so it could have been written to validate David's claim to the throne). The date of the writing of the book is disputable but the setting takes place during the time of the Judges, and considering the genealogy of David from Ruth and Boaz, it probably took place, more specifically, during the time of the judge Gideon, around last half of 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. These days are considered the dark days of Israel's history when there was no king so each man did what was right in his own eyes (Judges 17:6).

Main theme is the idea of loving-kindness or loyal love or covenant loyalty. This is put forward by the Hebrew word HESED.

Other important words:

Kinsman-redeemer- Lev. 25:25 - male relative who would provide for them and their family name

Levirate provision - Deuteronomy 25:5-10 (marry brother's widow so that brother's name continued)

Special Law of Inheritance - Numbers 27:1-11 - Daughters of Zelophehad to inherit

Moabites forbidden from congregation - Deut. 23:3

Naomi- pleasant; Mara-bitter; Ruth-friendly; Bethlehem-House of Bread; Elimelech-God is King

### Chapter 1

v.1-5 - Elimelech, along with his wife Ruth, and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, leave Bethlehem where there is a famine for the land of Moab where he hears there is food. While there Elimelech dies. The two sons marry Moabite women and they stay there for ten years. Mahlon marries Ruth and Chilion marries Orpah. The two brothers then die and Naomi is left with just her two daughters in law.

v.6-18 - Naomi decides to go back home and encourages the daughters to go back to their people. Naomi prays that God will deal kindly (hesed) with them. Orpah, after some debate, decides to go back, but Ruth refuses to leave. v.16 and 17 contains the beautiful declaration of loyalty—your people will be my people, your God my God.

v.19-22 - They return to Bethlehem. Naomi believes God is against her (v.13 the Lord has turned against me) v. 20 Call me Mara for God has made my life bitter. They arrived at the BEGINNING OF THE BARLEY HARVEST.