

Ruth 1

April 23rd, 2021

Discussion Questions

Before You Begin: Pray asking God to help you see and hear His word rightly and ask Him to reveal himself to you as you read through the designated chapters this week. Then, read through Ruth 1 and consider the discussion questions as you reflect upon what you read.

Background and Setting to the Story of Ruth:

The events of Ruth occurred ***“In the days when the judges ruled” (verse 1)***. This was the period of about 400 years in Israel’s history between Joshua’s death and the beginning of the monarchy, when Saul was made Israel’s first king.

The very nation delivered from Egyptian slavery by God and placed safely in the Promised Land fell away and did the most unspeakable things. The book of Judges features a repeated pattern: people fell into ways worse than those of the previous generation, worshiping other gods and breaking the 10 Commandments; God afflicted the people through a foreign enemy to call them to repentance; after a time, Israel prayed for God’s mercy; then God raised up for them a judge who both conquered the foreign enemy and led Israel back to the right worship of God. However, when the judge dies, the people of Israel returned to their sinful ways and faithlessness towards God, and the cycle began all over again (**Judges 2**). The last verse of Judges sums everything up: **“Everyone did what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25)**. Yet despite their repeated unfaithfulness, God continued to show His faithfulness to His people!

In the midst of this dark time for Israel, we see in the Book of Ruth examples of living in obedience, purity and faith. The book of Ruth is beautiful story of God’s sovereignty, His loving faithfulness, His blessings on those who trust Him, and, ultimately, His amazing love for us!!

1. Read **Genesis 19:30-38**. What is the origin of the country of Moab?
2. Read **Judges 3:12-14**. What would the Israelites have thought of the Moabites, and why?
3. The story of Ruth begins with the departure from Israel by Elimelech and his family and their settling in Moab (**verses 1-5**). Why did Elimelech leave the land of Israel, the Promised Land?
4. Do you think Elimelech was doing *“what was right in his own eyes” (Judges 21:25)* rather than trusting God? What does **2 Corinthians 5:7** teach us about how God wants us to live?

5. What personal tragedies struck Naomi's family (**verses 3-4**)?

6. Why did Naomi decide to return from Moab to her homeland of Judah? (**verse 6**)

7. What twofold blessing did Naomi invoke upon her two daughters-in-law (**verses 8-9**)? What reasons did Naomi give as she asked her daughters-in-law to leave (**verses 11-12**)?

8. Although Orpah returned home, Ruth "clung" to Naomi (**verse 14**). She insisted on remaining with her mother-in-law. Now, rather than receiving strangers (as she kindly did with Naomi's family when they came to Moab, even accepting marriage to Mahlon, an Ephrathite) Ruth would be received as a stranger in a new land.

Put yourself in Ruth's shoes. Considering the period of the judges and the history of the Moabites, what sort of fears do you think Ruth had or didn't have?

9. Discuss Ruth's commitment in **verses 16-17**. What five promises did Ruth make to Naomi?

10. What character traits of Ruth do you admire and desire to imitate in either your own relationship with God or with others?

11. Upon return to Bethlehem with Ruth, what name did Naomi ask to be called? To whom did Naomi attribute her bitter, difficult circumstances?

12. At what time of the year did Naomi return to Bethlehem?

**May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Romans 15:13**