

“Introduction to the Book of Ruth”
Ruth 1:1-5

- *Historical Background of Ruth:*
 - Most scholars agree that the book of Ruth was written around 1000 BC. Jewish tradition assigns the prophet Samuel as the writer of the book of Ruth. During the time of the Judges the Israelites had committed to serve God, (Joshua 24:14-18) but over time started doing what was right in their own eyes, (Judges 17:6 & 21:25) forsaking the Lord and turning to foreign gods (Judges 2:10-12). The Israelites would primarily cry out to God during times of military or economic crisis, (Judges 10:9-14) but had very little interest in God’s involvement in their everyday lives (Judges 2:16-19).
 - The Moabites and the Ammonites came from the incestuous relationship between Lot and his daughters (Genesis 19:36-38) and Israel had regular conflict with these two people groups. The Moabites and the Ammonites were on the Eastern border of Israel east of the Dead Sea. The Moabites had many gods (Judges 10:6) and Chemosh (possibly another name for Molech) was their chief god (Numbers 21:29). Chemosh was worshipped by human sacrifice (2 Kings 3:26-27; Leviticus 18:21) and orgies historically. The Moabites influenced Israel, primarily by intermarriage, to worship false gods (1 Kings 11:1-4; Nehemiah 13:23-27) and Israel was enslaved by the Moabites for 18 years because of their sin (Judges 3:12-30). The Israelites also had conflict with Moab in Numbers 22-24 as well.
 - Ruth, a Moabite, was also a part of the lineage of Christ (Matthew 1:5; Ruth 4:21-22).
- *The main themes of Ruth:*
 - *God is sovereign:* God has supreme authority and all things are under His control. He has the right to do all things according to His own good pleasure.
 - *God is providential:* God seeing to it that things happen in a certain way for a certain purpose (Ephesians 1:11; Psalm 115:3; Daniel 4:34-35; Daniel 2:20-21; Isaiah 46:9-10).
 - *The character and attributes of God:* God is there at all times (Hebrews 13:5-6; Romans 8:38-39); God cares for us at all times (1 Peter 5:7; Psalm 55:22); God will provide for His people (Philippians 4:19; Matthew 6:25-33); God loves us and has redeemed us (1 John 4:9-11; Titus 2:14); God is good (Psalm 145:8-9; Psalm 34:8-9).
 - These things are questioned in the face of evil, uncertainty, isolation, fear, confusion, and death. This is the battle of endurance, encouragement, and hope (Romans 15:4 & 15:13).
 - Human joy is enriched and elevated and great suffering has purpose in knowing the God of the Bible and having a biblical worldview (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18; 2 Corinthians 4:16-17).