

In outlining Ruth a number of possibilities for a short book are given:

- I. Ruth's Return with Naomi 1
- II. Ruth's Care of Naomi 2
- III. Ruth' Appeal to Boaz 3
- IV. Ruth's Link to David 4

Here is a content outline somewhat more explanatory of the character of the book:

- I. Adventures in the land of Moab 1:1-18
- II. The Return to Israel 1:19-22
- III. The meeting with Boaz 2
- IV. Adventures of the Threshingfloor 3
- V. The Redemptive Purchase 4:1-12
- VI. Summary 4:13-22

And you will see a symmetrical development of the book on this line

- A. Elimelech 1:1-18
 - B. Naomi 1:19-22
 - C. Boaz and Ruth 2:1-23
 - C. Ruth and Boaz 3:1 --4:13
 - B. Naomi 4:14-17
- A. Elimelech 4:18-22

Sometimes the smaller the book the easier the outline with any meaning...you can "hold the whole thing in your hand", so to speak, and thereby get a much better grasp on what it means.

So far as the history of redemption goes Ruth sheds a little historical light through depicting the openness of the covenant community, the preservation of the land, and God's providence in the lineage of Jesus Christ. The largest contribution, I think, is the dramatic portrayal of the reality of redemption and the principles on which it works. This is a demonstration of the principles given in Leviticus 25 and provides a divine foreshadow of the means of redemption that apply to all in the history of God's church. Ruth enables us to see that the law of God was operable at this time and honored. The kinsman-redeemer work is a plot worth following through all of the Scripture.

Some questions regarding the book include that of Levirate marriage...is this part of the purpose of the book? and the understanding of Ruth in the light of Deuteronomy 23:3-4.

With regard to archaeology please see our notes on the book of Judges. Much that has been discovered confirms the general character of the age but I don't think any pictures of Ruth or Boaz have been found yet.

The key to Ruth is to understand the historic background and what was involved in the death of Elimelech and his sons. At that point we need pick up the plot and see how God works to resolve a very difficult situation. The acts of Providence are combined with the right acts of persons who base their decisions on good judgment and the known will of God. The end is restoration and recovery with health to all parties. To see this outworking is the key to this book

Some study tips. Naturally you can read the book of Ruth at one sitting! But read it to see the redemptive history at work. Read to understand the Davidic genealogy and read to see the development in the chief characters of the book--spiritual development that is.