Handout: Ruth Lesson 1

Ruth is read in Jewish Synagogues on the Feast of Shavuot, known in English as the Feast of Weeks and at the time of Christ as the Feast of Pentecost (Greek word meaning 50th day since 50 days were counted from the previous annual feast). Reading the scroll of Ruth at the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost is considered particular appropriate by Jews for three reasons:

- 1. Much of the Book of Ruth takes place during the period that is somewhat equivalent to the interval of the seven weeks between the beginning of the barley harvest on the day after the holy Sabbath during the Feast of Unleavened Bread (Lev 23:9-14) and the end of the wheat harvest fifty days later on the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (Lev 23:15-21). It is in the instructions for the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost that the requirement for leaving the gleanings for the poor like Ruth is mentioned a second time in the Torah (see Lev 19:9-10; 23:22; Dt 24:19).
- 2. Since the 2nd or 3rd centuries AD the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost has been associated with the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai and is related to the theme of Ruth taking the Torah upon herself as the ideal convert at the time the giving of the Law was remembered.
- 3. Ruth's descendant, King David, was believed by Jewish tradition to have been born and also to have died at the time of the Feast of Weeks/Pentecost (*Jewish Study Bible*, page 1579).

Key words: The noun *hesed* = "covenant loyalty" and "faithfulness" in action as well as attitude (see Rt 1:8; 2:20; 3:10). The verb *baruk*, "to bless" and its related noun *berukah*, "blessing," is the bestowing of God's favor in a sanctifying act (see Rt 2:19; 3:10). *Hesed* is found alone near the beginning of the story (Rt 1:8) and *baruk* is found alone at the end (Rt 4:14). The two words occurs twice together in the middle of the story (Rt 2:19-20 and 3:10). In the Book of Ruth, Naomi, Ruth and Boaz are models of *hesed*. Other key words include the Hebrew verb *ga'al*, "to redeem," and the noun *go'el* "redeemer" (Lev 25) related to the obligation of the *Go'el Haddam* (Blood Redeemer) who voluntarily shows *hesed* to his kinsmen in need of assistance.

God is mentioned 23 times in 85 verses. Of those times, the Divine Name *YHWH* is written eighteen times, the title *Shaddai* (Almighty?) is used for God twice, and the word *Elohim* (god plural) is used for Yahweh God of Israel three times.

References to the God of Israel in the Book of Ruth			
Hebrew word	Scripture reference in the Book of Ruth		
YHWH (the divine Name believed to be	Chapter 1: verses 6, 8, 9, 14 17, 21 (twice)		
pronounced Yahweh)	Chapter 2: verses 4 (twice), 12 (twice), 20		
	Chapter 3: verses 10, 13		
	Chapter 4: verses 11, 12, 13, 14		
Elohim (god plural but referring to the One	Chapter 1: verse 16 (twice)		
true God of Israel)	Chapter 2: verse 12		
Shaddai (Almighty?)	Chapter 1: verses 20 and 21		
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SUMMARY OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

BIBLICAL	#5 THE JUDGES OF ISRAEL					
PERIOD						
FOCUS	RUTH ENTRUSTS HER	LIFE TO NAOMI &	RUTH ENTRUSTS HER LIFE TO BOAZ & THE			
	NAOMI'S	GOD	GOD OF IS	GOD OF ISRAEL		
COVENANT		THE SINAI CC	OVENANT			
SCRIPTURE	1:11	:19	3:1	4:14:22		
DIVISION OF TEXT	RUTH AND	NAOMI	RUTH AND BOAZ			
TOPIC	Introduction: Naomi's family is destroyed in the deaths of her husband and sons	Ruth unites herself to Naomi and travels to Israel	Ruth asks Boaz to become her Go'el Haddam, "Blood Redeemer"	Conclusion: Naomi's family is restored in the birth of Obed, son of Ruth and Boaz		
LOCATION	MOAB	ISRAEL: the fields of Bethlehem in Judah	ISRAEL: The threshing floor of Bethlehem and the gates of the town	ISRAEL: Boaz's home in Bethlehem		
TIME	c. 1100 BC during the latter age of the Judges and prior to the kingship of Saul; c. 12 years from journey to Moab to birth of Naomi's grandson					

TIME LINE BC: JUDGESUNITED KINGDOMDIVIDED KINGDOM								
Northern Kingdom = Israel / Southern Kingdom = Judah								
c. 1300	c.1200	1100	1050	1000	930	722	587/6	
Conque	est of c. Period o	of the Judges	Saul	David /	Rehoboam=	Assyria	Babylon	
Canaa	n		/	Sol	oman Civil War	destroys Israel	destroys Judah	
		Ruth	and Boaz	builds th	ne Temple			

Handout 3: Ruth Lesson 1 THE 12 PERIODS OF SALVATION HISTORY

(most dates are approximate)

1.	Creation and History of the Early World	? – 2000 B.C.
2.	The Patriarchs	2000 – 1675 B.C.
3.	The 12 Tribes in Egypt/ The Sinai Covenant	1675 – 1275 B.C.
4.	The Conquest of Canaan	1315/1275 – 1275/1220 B.C.
5.	The Rule of the Judges of Israel	1220 – 1050 B.C.
6.	The United Kingdom of Israel	1050 – 930 B.C.
7.	The Divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah	930 – 722 B.C.
8.	The Assyrian Exile of Israel and The Babylonian Exile of Judah	722 – 538 B.C.
9.	The Remnant of Judah Returns/ The Conquest of the Greeks	538 – 323 B.C.
10	The Revolt of the Maccabees/ The Rule of the Hasmons	323 – 63 B.C.
11	. Jesus the Messiah	28 B.C. – 30 AD
12	. The New Covenant Church (Messianic Age—Final Age of Man)	30 A.D. – ?

The struggle between life and death, happiness and suffering appears in various ways in the first chapter:

- A famine ends the happy life in Judah and death ends the happy unity of family life in Moab.
- The names of the family members reflect the struggle between happiness and sorrow: Naomi means "pleasant/sweetness," Elimelech means "my God is king," Mahlon means "sickness,' Chilion may mean "pinning away" or "consumptive," Orpah is interpreted as "she who turns away," Ruth may mean "friend" or "companion."
- The marriages in Moab promise a fruitful family, but the marriages are barren.
- Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth live but Elimelech, Mahlon and Chilion die.
- Death of the family unity continues in the separation of the women as Orpah returns to Moab.
- Naomi's name means "pleasant/sweetness" but she requests to be called "bitterness" because of her suffering.

ISRAEL'S LITURGICAL AND CIVIL CALENDAR YEAR

Month	Liturgical year order	Civil year order	Modern equivalent	Feast days & Agricultural Season (+ = God ordained annual and ++ pilgrim feasts * = national feasts)	
Aviv/Abib (Nisan)	1	7	March/April	+Passover 14 th , ++Unleavened Bread 15-21 st (sacred assembly on 15 th and 21 st), +Firstfruits on Sunday of Unleavened Bread holy week. Spring equinox 15 th . The "Latter rains" & flood season, beginning of barley and flax harvest	
Ziv (Iyyar)	2	8	April/May	Dry season, apricots ripen	
Sivan	3	9	May/June	++Weeks (Pentecost) 50 days from Firstfruits as ancients counted; wheat harvest, dry winds, early fig harvest, grapes ripen	
Tammuz	4	10	June/July	Hot, dry season: grape harvest	
Ab	5	11	July/Aug.	Hot, olive harvest	
Elul	6	12	Aug./Sept.	Dates and summer figs	
Ethanim (Tishri)	7	1	Sept./Oct.	+Trumpets = 1 st , +Day of Atonement =10 th ++Booths (Tabernacles) = 15- 21 st & 22 nd sacred assembly; Fall equinox 15 th ; "Former (early) rains," plowing & seed time	
Bul (Heshvan)	8	2	Oct./Nov.	Rains, winter figs, wheat and barley sown	
Chislev	9	3	Nov./Dec.	*Hanukkah (feast of dedication); winter begins	
Tebeth	10	4	Dec./Jan.	Coldest month, rains and snow in mountains	
Sebat	11	5	Jan./Feb.	Growing warmer, almond trees in bloom	
Adar	12	6	Feb./March	*Purim; spring: "Latter rains" begin, citrus & fruit harvest	

Seven annual feasts are God ordained feasts (Ex 12:1-28; 43-51; 13:1-10; Lev 23:5-44; Num 28:16-29:39) including three pilgrim feasts; *Hanukkah and Purim are national feasts proclaimed by the people and are not God ordained (1 Mac 4:36-61; 2 Mac 10:1-8; Esther 9:20-32). The Feasts of Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles fell respectively near the spring and fall equinoxes.

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Ruth's Family Tree

