

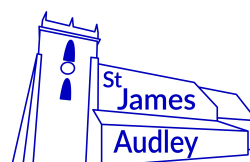


Picture © @AroundAudley, Used with permission

# Bible Reading Notes

February 2021

Ruth



# Bible Reading Notes

---

## How to use these Bible reading notes

These Bible reading notes are a resource to help you feed on God's word a little and often and allow it to change your life. If you miss a day (or several!), don't feel guilty or try to catch up; just pick up wherever you left off – it doesn't matter if it's the wrong date. Here are some tips on how to get the most out of this:

1. Find a time and place where you can be quiet but awake. Maybe set an alarm on your phone to remind you each day.
2. Pray: ask God to help you understand what he says.
3. Use the notes to help you think about the passage (use a good translation of the Bible like the NIV).
  - *'Read' tells you which verses to read*
  - *'Apply' shows how it affects you*
  - *'Pray' suggests ways to talk to God about it*
4. Pray about what you have read. You might also like to use the Church Prayer Diary.
5. Look for a chance to share with someone what God has been saying to you.

---

*These notes are easy to install on most phones or tablets. Install the 'PrayerMate' App and you'll find it under 'Add Subject → Church Life → UK Churches → St.Philemon's → Bible Notes'. You can also find them on our website: [www.stphilemons.co.uk](http://www.stphilemons.co.uk). If you have any problems, email [miriam@stphilemons.co.uk](mailto:miriam@stphilemons.co.uk).*

## Monday 1<sup>st</sup> February

This month we are reading Ruth.

It is one of the most beautiful stories in the Bible. In the book of Ruth, we will see God's kindness and faithfulness in how he deals with one family. We'll also see how God weaves their story into the fabric of his sovereign plan for Israel, and for the whole World.

Ruth begins with the words: 'In the days when the judges ruled...' so to understand the times when this took place, we begin by reading some verses in the book of Judges.

### Read Judges 17v5-6 & 21v25

- What does this repeated phrase tell us about the society of Israel in the time of the Judges?
- Why does the writer of Judges think it's significant that '*In those days Israel had no King.*'?
- Though there was no King in Israel, who should the people have been following?

### Apply

- What would it have been like to live in Israel in these days?
- What are the similarities and differences between their time and ours?
- Pray for help to do what is right in God's eyes.

## **Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> February**

Today we are introduced to a seemingly insignificant family in Israel.

### **Read Ruth 1v1-2**

- Who are the members of this family?
- What problem do they face?

God knows that it is best for his people when they are faithful to him. Often God uses the difficulties of life to discipline his people and to draw them back to depending on him.

- With this in mind, what is wrong with Elimelek's response to the famine in the land?
- Do you think there is any significance that the name Bethlehem means 'House of Bread'?

### **Apply**

- What difficulties are you facing today?
- What are you tempted to trust in, instead of God?
- Pray - bringing your difficulties to God and asking for his help.

## **Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February**

In today's reading we see this family's situation go from bad to worse.

### **Read Ruth 1v3-5**

- Think of the culture of the time... what effects would Elimelek's death have upon the family?

For Israelites reading this, at the mention of Moabite women, they would be reminded of the women of Moab who seduced the Israelite men in Numbers 25, leading them into sexual sin as well as making sacrifices to their gods.

- What would Israelites think of Mahlon and Kilion marrying Moabite women?
- Imagine that you are Naomi at the end of v5, how would you feel?

### **Apply**

- Is there a situation in your life that you feel is hopeless?
- Pray, bringing it to God and asking him to lead you.

## Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> February

### Read Ruth 1v6-10

In these verses Naomi turns back towards Judah. Here we also have the first mention of 'the Lord', which marks that Naomi is not only returning home, but also turning back towards God, the promised land and his chosen people.

- What makes Naomi return home?
- What would have made this decision easy/difficult?
- Look again at v8-10 - what do you find surprising about Orpah and Ruth's desire to return to Naomi's people?

### Apply

For Naomi, hearing that in Bethlehem, God had provided food for his people, encouraged her to turn back towards him.

- What things encourage you to turn to God?
- Are there any areas of life where you are not trusting God? How can you turn towards him today?

## Friday 5<sup>th</sup> February

### Read Ruth 1v11-18

- What reasons does Naomi give her daughters-in-law to encourage them to return to their Mother's house?

Orpah leaves, 'but Ruth clung to her' (v24)

- Why do you think Ruth chooses to stay with Naomi?
- What is surprising about this?
- Look again at v16-17 - what is Ruth's commitment and who does she expect to hold her to her word?

We are not told what has made Ruth, this Moabite woman, commit herself not only to her widowed mother-in-law, but also to commit herself to God and to his people. Naomi, though she is disobedient, has drawn Ruth to put her trust in the Lord and his promises.

### Apply

- Who helped you to put your trust in God, and how did they do it?
- Who is there in your life who you can help to turn to God and put their trust in Him and His promises?

## **Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 1v19-21**

As you imagine Naomi and Ruth approaching Bethlehem, remember that at least 10 years have passed.

Your Bible may tell you in the footnotes that the name Naomi means 'pleasant'; and the name Naomi wants to be known as, 'Mara', means 'bitter'.

- Spend a moment imagining the scene as Naomi and Ruth arrive.
- Naomi says that she went away full - is she accurate?
- Who does Naomi attribute her misfortune to? Is she right?

(Note: for those last two questions I think the answer is both yes and no.)

### **Apply**

Is there anything in your life that you are blaming God for?

- If yes - Take some time to examine yourself to see how you have shaped your circumstances. Pray that God would lead you through.
- If not - reflect on Naomi's understanding of fullness and emptiness - do you agree or disagree with her?



## **Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 1v22**

This verse is a bridge from chapter 1 into chapter 2.

- Think on all that has happened in chapter 1 that has brought Naomi and Ruth to this point.

They arrive 'as the barley harvest was beginning.' (The barley harvest was the first harvest to be gathered in.)

- Why do you think the author includes this detail?
- How does this make you feel towards chapter 2?

### **Apply**

- In life, and especially through Jesus, what reasons do you have for future hope? (think of as many as you can)

## **Monday 8<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 2v1-3**

Here we are introduced to another person, Boaz.

- What significant information are we given about Boaz?

Gleaning was an accepted practice in Israel for the foreigner and the destitute. God made this provision in his law. (e.g. Lev.23:22 instructed landowners not to harvest to the corners, and Deut. 24:19-22 said that they were not to go over their crop a second time, but to leave all that they had missed 'for the foreigner, the fatherless and the widow.')

- Whose field did Ruth glean in?
- The writer says, 'as it turned out...' what do you think we as readers are meant to draw from this?

In these opening verses we see God's provision, both through his law and also by guiding Ruth's steps.

### **Apply**

- Spend time reflecting on and giving thanks for God's care for you. God provides for you in many ways; through his commands, his son, his people and in guiding your steps.

## **Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 2v4-7**

Ruth and Boaz will be the two main characters through the rest of this story. Boaz is a wealthy man of standing and Ruth a widow from Moab.

- From these verses, what are your first impressions of Boaz?
- What more have you learned about Ruth's character?

### **Apply**

Take some time to reflect on the way that God, in Christ, calls both the wealthy and the poor, and uses them for the building up of his kingdom.

- How can you be used by him today?

## **Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 2v8-10**

Here we listen in to a conversation between Boaz and Ruth. We also begin to see more of what Boaz is like.

- Think about how widowed Moabite women would normally be regarded in Israel. What is surprising about how Boaz greets Ruth?
- What kindnesses does Boaz show to Ruth?
- How does Ruth respond?

As the story unfolds, we will see more and more similarities between Boaz and Jesus.

- What similarities do you see between the way Boaz interacts with Ruth and how Jesus was during his time on earth?

### **Apply**

- What similarities do you see between the way Boaz treats Ruth and the way Jesus has treated you?
- Do you think v10 gives a good example of how we should respond to Jesus' kindness?

## Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> February

### Read Ruth 2v10-12

As we saw yesterday Ruth asks Boaz the most obvious question in v10.

- What reason does Boaz give for showing kindness to Ruth?
- What is Boaz's prayer for Ruth?
- How does Boaz understand Ruth's relationship with 'the Lord, the God of Israel'?

### Apply

When someone puts their faith in Jesus, they have come to take refuge under the wings of 'the Lord, the God of Israel'.

- Take some time to reflect on that image of a bird with its chick; and either a) give thanks to God for covering you, or b) ask him to help you take refuge in him.

## **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 2v13-16**

In this passage Boaz's kindness to Ruth goes to another level. It isn't just compassion, it is extravagant kindness.

- Why does Ruth not think she deserve Boaz's kindness?
- What does Boaz do for Ruth in these verses?
- Which of these kindnesses do you think is the biggest?

### **Apply**

Like Boaz, Jesus isn't just kind and generous to us, but he is extravagantly kind and generous.

- Imagine that you don't know anything about the gospel. What would you see as the standard for a Holy God being kind to sinners?
- Now think of the ways as God has lavished his kindness on you in Christ. (Think of as many as you can)
- Pray and give thanks.

## **Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> February**

*Before you read today's passage, think back to when Naomi waved off Ruth to go and glean in the fields. Think of the emotions Naomi would have felt as Ruth left.*

### **Read Ruth 2v17-18**

(Note: an Ephah is about 13kg.)

- Can you picture Ruth walking home? (Think of 13kg of rice/flour/pasta.)
- How would Naomi have felt when she saw what Ruth had gathered and ate the leftover lunch?

### **Apply**

Naomi's view of her situation would have changed almost instantly because there were signs of provision and hope.

- How does knowing what God has given you through Jesus help you to face the worries and uncertainties of life?

## **Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> February**

Today we are taking a little break from Ruth in order to get some key background information on Guardian Redeemers from the book of Leviticus.

God had allotted the promised land to the different tribes, and within the tribes to clans and families. He then gave laws in order to maintain the different families' inheritance. One such law was to do with the right to redeem.

### **Read Leviticus 25v25-28**

- When was the right to redeem permitted to be used?
- Who had the right to redeem?
- What does this rule show us about God's character?

### **Apply**

We no longer live in a land given to us by God, but we are still to reflect God's fairness and mercy.

- How can you do that? Both today, and in your life generally?



## **Monday 15<sup>th</sup> February**

Today we return to Ruth and Naomi as they are reunited at the end of Ruth's day of gleaning. Remember she's just brought home 13kg of barley.

### **Read Ruth 2v19-20**

- How do you think Naomi said v19? Try reading it aloud the way you think she'd have said it.
- In what way had Boaz shown kindness to the dead?
- Remembering what you learned yesterday, what hope does it bring that Boaz is a guardian redeemer?

### **Apply**

If you had read on in Lev.25 yesterday, you would have seen that redemption was for people as well as for property, if they had sold themselves into slavery. It is in this way that Jesus is our redeemer; redeeming us from our slavery to sin and out of the kingdom of darkness.

- Ruth and Naomi needed a redeemer but our need was even greater. Give thanks to God for sending Jesus.

## Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February

### Read Ruth 7v24-27

Remember that the barley was the first of the crops to be harvested;

- What further news does Ruth give Naomi of Boaz's kindness?
- What are the main benefits of staying in Boaz's fields?

The chapter finishes with Ruth and Naomi in a far better situation than they were at the beginning. The passage finishes with the quite settled words, '*And she lived with her mother-in-law.*'

However, there is still uncertainty about what will happen once the harvesting has been completed...

- Given what has happened, why should they trust God with this new concern?

### Apply

- What are you worried about?
- Think of God's provision and kindness to you in the past and trust him with your future. Pray for help to trust him.

## Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> February

### Read Ruth 3v1-4

- What does Naomi hope to find for Ruth?
- Why does Naomi think Boaz is a good option?
- Can you put Naomi's plan into your own words?
- Do you think the plan is morally upright?
  - Why/Why not?

### Apply

It could be argued that God had given Naomi enough reasons to trust him, that she didn't need to force the issue with Boaz in this way. Others would argue that Boaz needed a wee nudge and Naomi didn't tell Ruth to do anything sinful.

- Pray that God would give you wisdom as you walk through life. Ask him to help you to make wise decisions and to know what is the right course of action.

## **Thursday 18<sup>th</sup> February**

Even though Naomi's plan is risky and risqué, as a dutiful daughter-in-law Ruth responds in the way we would expect.

### **Read Ruth 3v5-8**

- How would Ruth have felt as she walked at night down to the threshing floor?
- How would she have felt as she uncovered his feet and lay down?

I imagine Ruth lying wide awake at Boaz's feet waiting for him to wake up. Not knowing what will happen next.

Then he is startled and turns and finds a woman lying at his feet.

### **Apply**

On the face of it, I don't think we should apply these verses directly to ourselves! However, we can give thanks that even although we are often foolish in our actions, God in his mercy protects us and continues to work out his purposes.

## Friday 19<sup>th</sup> February

Today we see that Ruth and Boaz's godliness help them to escape the precarious situation that Naomi has put them in.

### Read Ruth 3v9-11

Ruth chooses her words very carefully. In the original language Hebrew, 'corner of garment' is one word and it can also mean 'wing' depending on how it's being used. This is the same word that Boaz used in Ruth 2v12 when he said '*under whose wings you have come to take refuge.*'

- How does Ruth think God will grant her refuge?
- How does this help Boaz to see his responsibility?
- What emotions would Ruth feel as Boaz promises to help her in v11?
- How do you feel as you read this?

### Apply

God takes care of those who trust him, but he often does it in very ordinary ways.

- Who do you have responsibility for? Think of both physical and spiritual needs.
- How can you serve God today?

## **Saturday 20<sup>th</sup> February**

At the end of yesterday's passage, I hope that you felt like everything was right in Ruth's world. We have been rooting for Ruth and Boaz since they met in the field but now there's a twist, an unforeseen hurdle.

### **Read Ruth 3v12-15**

- Why does Boaz mention this other Guardian Redeemer?
- When does Boaz say he will sort it out?

At first light, before anyone can be recognised, Ruth prepares to leave. Boaz again displays his generosity; before she leaves, he gives her six measures of barley.

- Remember how you imagined Ruth felt as she walked down to the threshing floor. How do you think she felt as she walked home in the morning light?

### **Apply**

- Who in your life has God used to take care of you?
- Give thanks to God for providing for you in this way.

## **Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> February**

I imagine that Naomi had a sleepless night waiting for Ruth to come home. Knowing that humanly speaking their entire future hinged on the outcome of this night.

### **Read Ruth 3v16-18**

- Ruth 'told her everything Boaz had done', re-tell the story of the previous night in the way you think Ruth would have done. What would she have included?
- What significance is there in the six measures of barley?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how much confidence does Naomi have in Boaz?

### **Apply**

As we have looked at earlier, there are many similarities between Boaz and Jesus;

- What similarities do you see between Boaz's care and provision for these two widows and Jesus' care and provision for us?
- Thank God for them.

## Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> February

### Read Ruth 4v1-4

- What is the happy co-incidence in v1? Do you think we are meant to see God's hand at work in that?

In ancient Israel the gate was normally the place for official business. Often there were seats in the gate, where the elders would sit.

- Can you picture Boaz assembling first of all the other redeemer (we never get his name), and then ten of the elders of the town?
- What does Boaz miss out as he tells the other redeemer about the land belonging to Naomi?
- How do you feel as you read the answer in v4, '*I will redeem it.*'?

### Apply

Though it is clear that Boaz is keen to be completely upright, it does seem that he is being a little crafty in the way he establishes a setting that will force an answer, and in the way he presents the information, keeping back the information about Ruth.

- Pray that you too will be both wise and innocent in the way you conduct your business and your service to God.



## **Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February**

### **Read Ruth 4v5-8**

Now we find out why Boaz had not mentioned Ruth at first.

- Why does Ruth's existence mean the man will not redeem?
- Why did the other redeemer want to redeem the land? Why does Boaz want to redeem the land?
- What strange way is the transaction confirmed?

### **Apply**

We see here that the other redeemer was willing to obey God's command to redeem, but for selfish motives. Boaz acts out of love and concern for the destitute, which reflects the intention of the command.

Take some time to examine your heart.

- Do you obey God because it suits your agenda?
- Or do you obey God because you love him and want to do what is right in his eyes?

## Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> February

Take some time to remember back to where this story started. This family had disobediently left the promised land, and abandoned hope in God. The father died, followed by his two sons, leaving only Naomi and a Moabitess called Ruth. Now...

### Read Ruth 4v9-10

- What has Boaz done for Ruth and Naomi?
- What has Boaz done for Elimelek's family?

Remember Boaz's prayer for Ruth in 2v12; *"May the Lord, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge, reward you fully for what you have done."*

- How has God rewarded and blessed Ruth for her faithfulness to Naomi and to God?

### Apply

In chapter 1v16-17, Ruth's decision to go with Naomi, rather than return to the house of her own mother, looked like foolishness.

- Why was it not foolish?
- Where should you put your trust? What will that look like for you today?

## **Thursday 25<sup>th</sup> February**

In today's reading the elders and all the people pronounce a blessing on this new couple.

### **Read Ruth 4v11-12**

- Why are Rachel and Leah significant? (hint: They were Jacob's wives, and Jacob was the father of 12 sons, who founded the 12 tribes of Israel.)
- Why is Perez important to them? (hint: Bethlehem was a town in the territory of Judah, part of the land given to the descendants of Judah.)
- What is their prayer for Boaz's family through Ruth?

Their prayer is for God to bless this family. Little did they know that the descendants of this couple would be far more significant than Perez.

### **Apply**

While this blessing is pronounced on a very particular family of massive biblical significance, the example of praying for families is a good one.

- Take some time to pray for a family. Think about what God would want you to pray for them.

## Friday 26<sup>th</sup> February

### Read Ruth 4v13-15

- Who do the women credit for Naomi's change in fortunes?
- What do the women think of Ruth's value to Naomi?
- What has God given to Naomi through Ruth?

### Apply

We have seen God's sovereign care for Naomi, through to giving her a new beginning through her Guardian Redeemer. Remember how she felt when she returned from Moab, insisting that everyone call her Mara.

- Praise God that he never leaves us or forsakes us.
- Praise God for his son Jesus, our Guardian Redeemer, who has given us our own new beginning.

## **Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> February**

Here at the very end of the book we find out why this story was told, and why this little family are so important in Israel's history.

### **Read Ruth 4v16-22**

- Imagine you were an Israelite in the days of King David, how would you have felt as you read these verses?
- What was Ruth, the Moabitess widow's relationship to King David?

The book began telling us that this was the time when the judges ruled, but it finishes telling of the coming King. As new testament believers we have the added knowledge, that this genealogy from Perez to David, doesn't just lead to a King, but to the King of Kings Jesus.

### **Apply**

Spend some time thinking on the sovereign plan of God. He mercifully and kindly directs and blesses these simple but godly people, while at the same time he is weaving together the genealogical line of his Son Jesus the redeemer of the world.

Praise our great God!!

*(A little note - please allow some extra time for your Bible time tomorrow.)*

## **Sunday 28<sup>th</sup> February**

Clear a good amount of time, make a cup of tea or coffee and...

### **Read the book of Ruth**

- What was your favourite bit?

### **Apply**

- What one main thing have you learned about God?
- What more have you learned of Jesus' redemption?
- Is there a particular change that you need to make in response to reading Ruth?

Spend time thanking God for his story of redemption. It begins with the fall of Adam and Eve in the garden of Eden and is woven by God, through Ruth and Boaz to David, through David to Jesus, and through Jesus to you. As God through Boaz redeemed Ruth and Naomi; he was planning that he would, through Christ redeem you. Amazing!

I hope you enjoyed our studies in Ruth as much as I did.