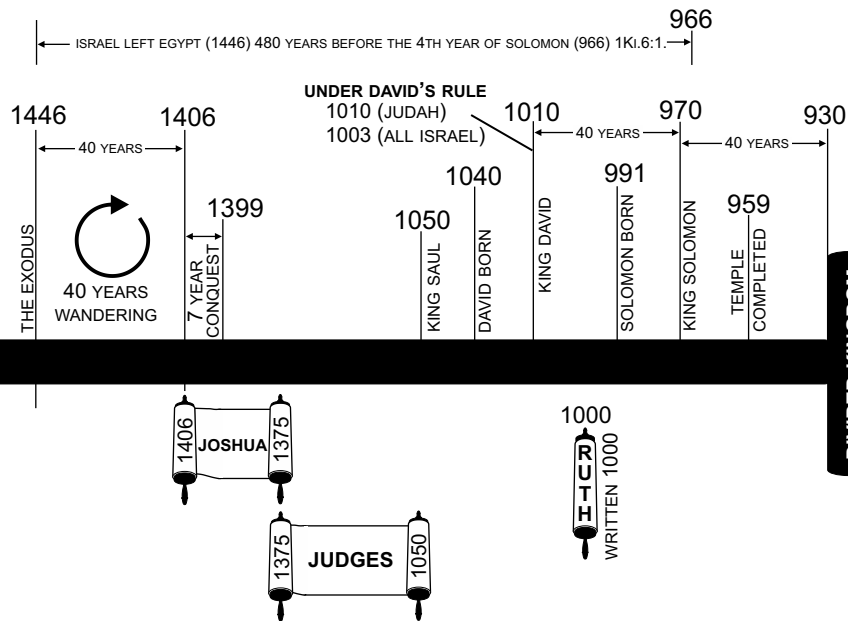


BOOK OF RUTH INTRODUCTION

DATING THE BOOK OF RUTH



TIME INDICATORS

- The story of Ruth takes place “in the days when the judges ruled” (**Ru.1:1**). This seems to indicate that it was written when the judges were no longer ruling.
- The book speaks of a custom “in former time in Israel” (**Ru.4:7**) which evidently is no longer in practice at the time the book was written. This was the legal custom of taking off a shoe to seal an agreement.
- The genealogy of David is mentioned (**Ru.4:18-22**) indicating it was written after he had become King in Israel. Solomon is not mentioned, maybe because he has not yet come to the throne. The genealogy seems to indicate the lineage was well known.
- The Talmud says that Samuel is the author of Ruth. However, Samuel died (1003BC) before David became King. Yes, the mention of David could be prophecy, but that does not seem likely here.

A Western view of History

- Primarily linear (tracing events in a chronological line from A to Z)
- With cause and effect viewed in naturalistic terms

Ancient Near Eastern view of History

- Primarily cyclic (often around the regular cycle of seasons)
- With cause and effect viewed in supernatural terms

OUTLINE OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

- Naomi's Bitterness (**Ru.1:1-22**)
- Ruth discovers a potential Kinsman Redeemer (**Ru.2:1-23**)
- Boaz agrees to be a Kinsman Redeemer (**Ru.3:1-18**)
- Boaz acquires right to be a Kinsman Redeemer (**Ru.4:1-12**)
- Naomi's Blessing (**Ru.4:13-22**)

This outline is prophetically dispensational. It starts with Israel out of fellowship with God. Then God calls out a people from the Gentiles through the Kinsman-Redeemer, Jesus Christ. Then Israel is blessed in the future.

BACKGROUND

- The story is set “in the days when the judges ruled” (**Ru.1:1**) which was characterized as a time when “there was no king in Israel.” This was a sad period in Israel's history. The phrase “Everyone did that which was right in their own eyes” characterized this period.
- The story of Ruth takes place between the seasons of Passover and Pentecost. (Pentecost came at the end of the grain harvest season.)
- There was a famine in the land (**Ru.1:1**). In the Bible a famine typically speaks of God's judgment on Israel. The spiritual condition of Israel may be the reason for the famine. Later, in Elijah's day, God sent a famine as judgment on Israel for worshipping Baal (**1Ki.16:30—17:1; 18:21, 37; 19:10**).

CHARACTERISTICS

- A quick reading through the book of Ruth gives us a sense of a love story. However, the word “love” does not occur in the book.
- Ruth, a Moabitess (Gentile) became a recipient of God's blessing as she believed in God. It shows that God is no respecter of persons.
- The book of Ruth is prophetic in nature. It is read annually by Orthodox Jews on the Feast of Pentecost [Hebrew, *shavout*] (Weeks). This is the Feast that prophetically speaks of the Church (**Ac.2**).
- Each of the characters of the book have a representative meaning that is very rich in its details.
- The book shows us some important practices of the time, namely, (1) Law of gleaning; (2) Levirate marriage; and (3) Law of redemption.