

## **Dr. David Howard, Joshua-Ruth, Session 31, Introduction to Ruth**

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This is Dr. David Howard in his teaching on the books of Joshua through Ruth. This is session 31, Introduction to Ruth.

Greetings, Professor David Howard here again. In this segment, we're going to be talking about the book of Ruth. So, if you've been following the video lectures of mine, we've covered Joshua and Judges, and now Ruth. And this book follows logically after the book of Judges and it looks ahead logically to the book of Samuel.

But we'll look more carefully at its place in the canon in a few minutes. But to begin, just to say some general things about the book of Ruth. This book contains one of the most delightful stories that we ever find in the Bible.

Here we see everything sort of working out right for the characters. It's almost a happily-ever-after story. Sympathetic characters, some sad things to begin with, and then it works out well for everyone.

It's well constructed as a literary piece and it's often found even in compendiums or collections of world literature as a beautiful example of a short story. With the introduction to things, a crisis is introduced, the climax where the denouement, the working out of things, and then sort of the wrap-up. So, it's praised on all sides as a beautiful literary story, even if people don't maybe believe the actual events in it.

Tells a simple story but very profound about one family's fortunes in a difficult time. We're told at the beginning that it takes place during the period of the Judges and we've been talking in the previous lectures about the terrible situations and conditions in the period of the Judges. So, this is a little ray of hope and a little light shining in the darkness of that period.

Showing God's low-key but certainly sure and steady involvement in the lives of these people and blessing them. So, let's talk about the book itself. The book gets its title from the main character, Ruth.

She's a Moabite woman. She's from Moab, east of the Dead Sea and she's not an Israelite. So, it's a story of someone who has come into the fold in a sense, become part of the family of God, not through her bloodlines, not through birth, but essentially by her embracing the faith of her mother-in-law and her husband's family.

She was blessed by Abraham's descendants. We've talked in previous lectures about the Abrahamic Covenant that says that God would bless those who bless Abraham

and his descendants and certainly Ruth was one who affirmed that, expressed and pledged her loyalty to her mother-in-law and she in turn was then blessed and there's a marriage into the household of Israel and things work out well. In terms of the authorship of the book, as with all the historical books, Joshua through Esther, the book is anonymous.

We have no record and no statement in the book itself about authorship. We have no statement about the book's authorship anywhere else in scripture. So essentially we don't know.

Jewish tradition assigned it to Samuel, which might be logical. He lived a few years after this, but otherwise, we really don't know. The suggestion has been made that maybe the author was a woman because of the prominence of two strong, worthy women, Naomi and Ruth, but again it's a conjecture.

There's just no way to know. So, my view on this issue with all of these books, as interesting as these things might be, the scripture does not make a point of something. We're in a sense wasting our time trying to figure that out unless we're just doing it for curiosity's sake, but it does not really help our interpretation of the book to guess at the author, so we'll just leave it at that.

In terms of the date of the book, the final word in the book is David, referring to King David, whose reign was from about 1010 B.C. down to about 970. So clearly the book would have been written after that. How long after that, we have no idea.

Many have claimed that it was written during the time of David as a legitimization of his reign, which we'll talk about in a few minutes. Others have argued that it really was written centuries later, during the time of Ezra and Nehemiah, and the reason for that being that Ezra and Nehemiah both instituted reforms in which they had discovered intermarriage with foreigners, and they forced a mass, essentially a divorce, there, putting away foreign wives from the men in God's people, and many have argued that this book kind of shows the other side of the coin, namely the embrace of a foreign wife, and she became part of the family of God, and some have argued that this book was written as an intentional polemic against those other books. I think it's clear that this book does show the other side of the coin from Ezra and Nehemiah, but I think there are reasons for the mass divorce in Ezra and Nehemiah, and there are mitigating factors there that we can't get into here.

I'll just give you a little commercial. I have written a textbook called Introduction to the Old Testament Historical Books, and I have a chapter on every one of the historical books, including Ezra and Nehemiah, I deal at length with that issue of the reforms in Ezra and Nehemiah, the mass divorce, and the ethics of that, so you can check that out if you're interested. But here, this does show the other side of that coin, and it shows a beautiful picture of a foreigner being embraced by God's people.

The literary nature of the book, it's been characterized in many different ways. As a short story, underlying that is an assumption that it's fictional. Some scholars have talked about it more of a historical short story, and I think that's a good characterization.

There's nothing in this book that suggests that it's fictional. As a matter of fact, there's more evidence that suggests that it's not, because of the careful attention to names at the beginning of the book, Elimelech and Naomi and their two sons, and then Ruth and Orpah, wives, and at the end, the genealogy that takes us all the way from the patriarch, Jacob, and down to David, carefully put together, so it's hard to see this is just fictional construction. But it is a beautiful literary document in that sense.

Let me say a little bit more about the literary nature of the book. Many scholars, as I've noted, praise the book for its beautiful storyline, but when you get to the end of the book, you have kind of a wrap-up at chapter 4, verse 17, where Ruth and Naomi have married, they have a son, his name is Obed, he's the father of Jesse, he's the father of David. So, the end of verse 17, chapter 4, finishes with David, and then after that, we have a very short genealogy, verses 18 to 22, that goes back to someone named Perez, and comes down all the way again to David.

And so, in some sense, there's a redundancy here, and this genealogy, of course, is not couched in a narrative structure, it's just a list. And so many scholars have probably said, probably the original form of the book was chapter 1, verse 1, through chapter 4, verse 17, that's the beautiful short story kind of construction, and then many scholars argue that the genealogy, sometimes seen as an appendix, was added at a later time to make more prominent the connection with David, and the assumption is that this is done in a very clunky way, a ham-handed way, and it was not necessary, and so these scholars would sort of dismiss the genealogy, and see this as a unnecessary and clunky way that kind of destroys the beauty of the rest of the book. My own view is, that we don't really know if this was written at the time of the rest of the book, or later, and in some senses, it doesn't really matter, because it is part of the final form of the book, this is the form that's come down, there's no manuscript evidence anywhere that the book ended at verse 17 of chapter 4, so we, if we're going to interpret all of scripture, we're obligated to take it as it is, and not sort of slice it up in ways in which we might prefer to see it.

So, my mantra, almost, with many of my classes, is that our job as exegetes, if we have an exegete hat on, an interpreter's hat, my job is to interpret the text that's there, not the text that I wish were there, or that I think should have been there, or should not have been there. So as we talk about the book, we will talk about the significance of the genealogy as part of the book, and in some ways, in a literary fashion, it does fit, because we have, in chapter 1, verses 1-5, the listing of many

names, and kind of setting the stage, and then at the end, we have a listing of many names, and kind of wrapping it up, putting it into context, so it's kind of bracketed by lists, chapters 1-5, and then chapter 4, 18-22. What is the purpose of the book? Many guesses, and many descriptions of that have been offered.

Certainly, it's a beautiful book that talks about loyalty and family ties, and things work out well, and we would certainly do well to look at it through that lens. As I said, some have seen it as an anti-Ezra Nehemiah polemic, arguing in favor of more inclusion of foreigners. Some have just said it's nothing more than just a pleasing short story, the same way we would read short stories today, or some of the fairy tales that we enjoy.

I think there's more to it than that, of course. I think that clearly the idea of loyalty is there, and I think that it does show a very beautiful story about a family, and God's working in a low-key way in the life of a family. But I think we have to take seriously the references to David at the end of the book, and in that sense, if we see the flow of the books that we've been studying here, Joshua, and especially Judges, Judges saying things have gotten to this downhill low point because there's been no godly king in the land, and we need a king.

The book of Ruth, then, following upon that in the Protestant canon, leads us ahead to, give us one story in the life of the lineage of the great godly king that was to come, David. And David is introduced in the very next book, of course, in 1 Samuel. So, I think it's there.

We certainly have to think in terms of, when we talk about the purpose of the book, we certainly have to think in terms of the Davidic nature of it. And I think it's looking ahead to the coming of the godly King David. It's part of a legitimization of the kingship of David, but also to show that God's providence is working.

God is not absent the way he seems to be in different parts of the book of Judges. God is very much present in the life of one family, and we just see a snapshot of that family a few generations before David comes along. In terms of the place of the book in the canon, as I've just said, in our Bibles, most of us who are reading Protestant Bibles, it comes right after Judges.

It fits there because the book begins by saying, that in the days when the Judges judged, in the days when the Judges ruled, there was a famine in the land, and it goes on. So right away, we have the setting placed against that backdrop, and it fits very well here. In the Hebrew canon, the Jewish canon appears in a different place.

The Hebrew canon was organized into three major sections. The first five books, the Pentateuch, the books of Moses, the books of the law, and the Torah, were Genesis to Deuteronomy. Then there's what's called the Prophets.

Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings, believe it or not, those are called Prophets. These are called former Prophets. And then right after Kings is Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and then the Book of the Twelve.

So, there are eight books of Prophets in the Hebrew canon. Different ways of counting, they're the same books as we have there. So, the book of the Twelve includes what we call the Twelve Minor Prophets.

But then in the next section, it includes all the other miscellaneous books that are not included in the first two sections, usually beginning with Psalms, and then Proverbs, or Psalms, Job, and then Proverbs. And then immediately after Proverbs is Ruth. Ruth is the first of what are called Megillot.

And Megillot is the word for scrolls. And there are five books called Megillot. These are Ruth, and Song of Songs, or Song of Solomon, Ecclesiastes, Lamentations, and Esther.

So, these are all five small books, and, in Jewish tradition, later, after the Old Testament, they came to be read at the five different festivals in the life of the yearly cycle of festivals. And Ruth was read at the festival of Feast of Weeks, the Pentecost, after Passover. But it's interesting that it occurs right after Proverbs, because, let me just point something out here.

If you have your Bibles, open to the book of Ruth. But then I'd also like to show you something at the end of Proverbs. So flip over to the end of Proverbs, chapter 31.

Proverbs ends in a way that's rather famous, as most people are aware. The book of Proverbs ends with a poem in verses 10 to 31 of chapter 31. A poem in praise of the godly woman, an excellent wife, something to that effect.

And it begins in my version, Proverbs 31, verse 10. It says, an excellent wife, who can find? She is far more precious than jewels. The heart of her husband trusts in her.

He will have no lack of grain. And it goes on to praise her to high heaven, really. And she's a good businesswoman.

She manages her affairs at home, at the gates of the city, and that's all good stuff. The Hebrew words for excellent wife in my version, talk about a godly woman, and different ways of translating that. But that term in verse 10, that term in verse 10 is eshet hayel.

Eshet is the word for wife or woman. And this is a word translated as worthy or excellent. Sometimes it's a word sometimes referred to, referring to men.

And usually, it's translated as valor. The term mighty men of valor include the word hayel there. So, we'll say that about Esther, about the godly woman in Proverbs.

This is an excellent wife. Now, if we go back to the book of Ruth, in chapter 3, when Boaz is talking to her, he says, Ruth chapter 3, verse 11, Boaz says, Now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you ask.

For all my fellow townsmen know that you are a worthy woman. In my version, that's the translation. And the two words there are the exactly same thing that we find in Proverbs, eshet hayel.

So, an excellent wife, ESV translates that way in Proverbs, the worthy woman here. In some ways it would be nice if the version translated the two in the same way to show the links because they are exactly the same two words in Hebrew. But the point is, Proverbs ends with talking about the ideal woman, the ideal wife, let's say.

And then we have an example of that in the very next book in the Hebrew canon, a short story showing Ruth as a paragon of that kind of excellence, that kind of worthiness. So that's a really interesting connection in the way the Hebrew canon is laid out. It's also interesting in the placement of the book the way we know it with Judges because the book of Judges also ends with that same word hayel in chapter 20.

So, if you want to flip back a couple of pages, when it's talking about the men of Benjamin and this civil war that's entangled the people, the men of Benjamin are valiant warriors and fighters. And in Judges chapter 20, verse 44, it says 18,000 men of Benjamin fell, all of them men of valor, men of hayel. So, and then also the end of verse 46 mentions the same word.

So, we don't think that Ruth was a warrior type, but it is interesting the wordplay. It fits with the end of Judges. She's, these are men of fighting valor.

She is a woman of great valor and value and worthiness in Ruth. And she's the paragon of virtue and example like the woman in Proverbs. So that's, those are some things about the place of the book in the canon.

Let's talk about the historical and cultural context of the book. Essentially, it's the same as we've talked about in the book of Judges. There's a time of chaos here.

There's a time of moral decline. This appears to be later in the period because it's a couple of generations removed from King David, who ascended to the throne in about 1010 BC. The period of the Judges begins around 1400, 1350, several hundred years before this.

The Moabites are the people of where Ruth comes from. And they were neighbors geographically, but also related because the Moabites, Moab originally was the son of Lot. Lot was Abraham's nephew.

Moab was born to Lot by the, unfortunately, the incestuous relationship with his daughter in Genesis 19. And so, the Moabites and Israelites are distantly related as distant cousins, so to speak. There are quite a few contexts between the two groups through the Bible.

After the exodus from Egypt, the Israelites, as they were wandering in the wilderness, clashed with Sihon, a king of the Amorites, who had seized control of Moab, back in Numbers 21. In Judges 3, we read about Eglon, a little Moabite kinglet, whom Ehud killed with a left-handed stab to the stomach. Here, the relationship between Israel and Moab seems to be rather stable, and Ruth is able to travel across.

Later, there's a conflict between Israel and Moab in 2 Kings. And the worship that the Moabites worshipped, their high god was Chemosh. And they also worshipped Baal and the Asherahs and so on, as most of the other Canaanites did.

So, before we get into the book itself, I want to talk about one more thing, and then the themes of the book. The special thing I want to spend a couple of minutes on is something called Leveret marriage. And this comes from the Latin term, lever, which means brother, or brother-in-law.

In chapters 3 and 4, where we have Ruth and Boaz getting ready to be married, there's a little glitch that appears, because there's someone who is a closer relative than Boaz, and he says that this man has the rights slash obligations to marry Ruth before Boaz would have any rights. And so many discussions in the book of Ruth claim that this, the law of leverage, which is actually told about in the Pentateuch, actually is what's going on here in the book of Ruth. And I would say, no, there are some close analogies, but not exactly.

There are two passages in the Pentateuch that are kind of the backdrop to this. And so, we'll look at those. The first is in Deuteronomy, chapter 25.

So let me ask you to turn back to that. This is the passage where the actual Leveret marriage is mentioned, where a widow's brother-in-law is obligated to marry her and to have a child, a son for her. So, let's look at the context, and then we'll see how it relates to the book of Ruth, or how it does not relate to the book of Ruth.

So, Deuteronomy 25, starting in verse 5. It says, If brothers dwell together and one of them dies and has no son, the wife of the dead man shall not be married outside the family to a stranger. Her husband's brother shall go into her and take her as his wife,

and he shall perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. So, in other words, if a woman's husband dies, she should be remarried to one of his brothers, not marry outside the family.

And the English words perform the duty of a brother-in-law, or of a husband's brother. The Hebrew word behind that is the word yabam. And that word occurs several times here.

I'm talking about this brother-in-law's duties. The word only occurs one other time in Scripture, and that's in Genesis 38, verse 8, in the context of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar. And when Tamar's husband dies, Judah's son dies, she comes to him and asks him to perform the duties, the same duties.

And the word is yabam. The word does not occur in the book of Ruth. So, this connection that often you'll see in studies or commentaries of Ruth is not really an exact connection.

But let's keep reading the Deuteronomy passage. So, verse 6, Deuteronomy 25. The first son whom she bears shall succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

So that's the way the system should be working. But verse 7 says, maybe it's not going to work that way. Verse 7, if the man does not wish to take his brother's wife, then his brother's wife shall go up to the gate, to the elders, and say, my husband's brother refuses to perpetuate his brother's name.

He will not perform the duty of a husband's brother to me. So, he will not do the yabam. Then the elders of the city shall call him and speak to him, and if he persists, say, no, I do not wish to take her.

Then his brother's wife shall go up to him in the presence of the elders and pull his sandals off his feet and spit in his face. So that's kind of a dramatic scene. Ruth did not spit in the face of the near kinsman in the Book of Ruth.

He's not really a brother-in-law. There's just a lot of significant differences here as well. And then it wraps up saying this is how it's going to work out.

So, the way it should work is the brother should step in. But as I've said, the place in Ruth, the place of that near kinsman, and in Ruth it's often translated as kinsman or kinsman redeemer or just redeemer. The word there is different.

The word is goel, translated as kinsman or near kinsman or kinsman redeemer. And this is the word used. That word is used not in Deuteronomy 25 at all, but it is used a whole slew of times in the Book of Leviticus, Chapter 25.



So that seems to be a closer analogy. So, let's look at that passage, Leviticus 25. And there are two sections in that chapter that are relevant to this.

One is in verses 23 to 34. And this is the section of the redemption, the verbal form of *goel*, the redemption of property. And then in verses 35 to 46, there is the redemption of poor relatives or poor brothers.

And so those two scenes or those two pictures seem to be closer to what's going on in Ruth because the word used is exactly the same, *goel* or the verbal form, *geel*. So, let's look at a couple of verses here. Leviticus 25, verse 23.

The land shall not be sold in perpetuity, for the land is mine, says the Lord. We've made that point back in the Book of Joshua, that the land of Canaan did not really truly belong to Canaanites, but it belonged to God, even when Israel was involved. It still belongs ultimately to God.

God says you are strangers and sojourners with me, and in all the country you possess, you shall allow a redemption. There's the word *goel* of the land. If your brother becomes poor, verse 25, and sells part of his property, then his nearest redeemer, that's the noun form, *goel*, shall come and redeem what his brother has sold.

And then it goes on through the chapter. So here it's talking about someone coming in and paying a price to redeem the land or redeem someone who has sold part of his property into someone else's possession, to redeem that to get it back to them. And that's sort of the thrust here.

It kind of shows the value, and importance of property ownership, or at least stewardship, and God owns the land, but he gives it to people, to individuals, to tribes, to the land of Israel in trust. Then similar, in verses 35 and following, the same should happen with someone who becomes poor, does not have land to give, but sells himself into slavery, into servitude to someone else, that eventually in the year of Jubilee, every 49th year, they are to be freed up. So, verse 35, if your brother becomes poor and cannot maintain himself with you, you shall support him as if he were a stranger and sojourner.

He shall live with you, take no interest from him, et cetera, et cetera. And then verse 40, he shall serve with you until the year of Jubilee. Then he shall go out and be free, and so on.

So, there's the idea of redeeming a person from servitude, the same way as the land. Both of these things seem to be in the backdrop of the ceremony or the institution that we find in the Book of Ruth. Having said that, it's been pointed out that the

specifics in the Book of Ruth about Boaz telling this near kinsman, this kinsman redeemer, in chapters 3 and 4 of Ruth, that if he's going to buy this field that belonged to Abimelech that now has come to Ruth, if he's going to buy the field, he not only gets the field, but he gets Ruth along with in the bargain.

There's nowhere in the Pentateuch that talks about that specifically. So that seems to be an expansion of the law that's not recorded in Scripture, that just became a custom apparently. Or who knows, maybe Boaz was just putting it, creating that on the spot.

But I doubt that because the near relative seems to agree with that, says, no, I can't afford to do that because I'll lose my own inheritance if that's the case. So this redemption of property with a wife, a woman to go along with it, is not found in Leviticus. It's not found in Deuteronomy.

Now, it has elements of both those passages. Here's the widow being redeemed by someone, which echoes in some ways the Deuteronomy passage. Here's the redemption of land, which echoes the Leviticus passage.

But it's not exact in either case. In Deuteronomy, it's a different word, and in Leviticus, it does not mention a woman coming along with the bargain. So you will see many, many studies of Ruth talking about the lever at marriage or this kind of custom, but it's not exactly the same as any of those.

It's its own little new kind of thing that we find in the Book of Ruth. Perhaps over the centuries some of these other criteria had been added as a custom, not as commanded by God in the Pentateuch. So now I'd like to talk about what we might call the theology of the book or some of the great themes in the book.

We could say this about almost every book in the Bible, but certainly, we see it here, and that is the idea of God's sovereignty and God's steadfastness in the book. There's a special focus on God here. It's interesting to notice, for example, it's a short book, of course.

It's only 85 verses, but in 23 of those verses God is mentioned. So a good more than a quarter, close to a third of the book mentions God specifically. And it's interesting that in 21 of those cases, the mention of God comes from the mouths of the characters.

In other words, the characters themselves are clearly bringing God into their lives and acknowledging him and so on. The narrative framework around it, in other words, the author of the book, as he's writing about the characters, only mentions God twice. Once at the very beginning of the book, chapter 1, verse 6. Once at the very end, chapter 14, verse 3. Otherwise, the references to God are in the mouths of

the characters, but it clearly shows God is an involved character in the book, and the human characters are clearly acknowledging God here.

Beyond that, we can see the way events unfold, and that God is always there. It's well-ordered and things just kind of work out well. But that kind of leads maybe to a second point we could make, and that is, ironically, we could perhaps talk about God's hiddenness in the book.

His role is a steady, quiet one, but as I said, the narrator, the author of the book, doesn't really tell us, this happened because God directed the events that way. Or several times, it seems like there are more coincidences. For example, in chapter 2, verse 3, about Ruth, it says, as it turned out, she found herself working in a field belonging to Boaz.

It's almost like, oh, it just so happened that way. Other historical books would probably say, God led her to the field of Boaz or something to that effect. In chapter 3, verse 18, Naomi is speaking to Ruth.

She says, wait, my daughter, until you find out what happens. She doesn't say until God causes this to take effect. So, in some ways, many commentators have compared the book of Ruth to the book of Esther.

In the book of Esther, God is not mentioned at all. I would argue that he is very much present, sort of in the background, and providentially working out. But it seems to me that in the book of Esther, certainly, and to another extent, Ruth, the hiddenness of God is also an intentional part of the book.

The point is that sometimes in real life, we're not always sure what events are directed by God, or what events are allowed by God, and to go maybe against his will. Yes, ultimately all things work out together for those who love him. But sometimes God lets things go, and his hand is not quite as involved.

And the author of the book certainly sort of seems to step back and let that play out in the mouths of the characters. But sometimes he seems to be talking more about just events worked out in the favor of God's people. A third piece of the puzzle, in terms of the themes of the book, I would argue, along with many commentators, that it really does fit into this larger, broader, what I would call, the theology of the monarchy.

We have a separate video clip where we talked about the idea of God's plans for kings in Israel that goes back to the very beginning. It might be good to review that if you haven't seen that one. But from the very beginning, God promises kings to the line of Abraham, Genesis 17 and Genesis 35, and then promises to the line of Judah, Genesis 49.

There's a very important passage in Deuteronomy 17 that gives the characteristics of the godly king. The godly king is not to be like the kings of the nations around, but rather there's a very counter-cultural picture of the godly Israelite king. The king is not to multiply horses and to trust in his own military or trust in foreign alliances, but he is to be rooted in God's word and trust in God to be the warrior.

So that's a backdrop, especially to the book of Judges, where things go downhill so far and so fast, and the author of Judges repeatedly says, there's no king in Israel. Everybody was doing it right in his own eyes. Things had gotten to this point, says the author of Judges, precisely because there was no godly king in Israel leading people toward the Lord instead of a decentralized, everybody doing whatever they wanted.

And the book of Ruth fits into that pattern, particularly on the emphasis on David. So, let's take a look at that now, and we'll kind of go over it more briefly as we go through the exegesis of the book. But turn to Ruth chapter 4. Well, before, we'll just remind you, at the beginning of the book, it's better to start at chapter 1, and notice that the story is from the family of a man named Elimelech.

He had his wife Naomi, and two sons, Mahlon and Chilion, and they were Ephrathites from Bethlehem and Judah. And of course, as we read later, we find out Bethlehem is the place, the city of David. This is where David is from, and it's in Judah, echoing the promises to Judah back in Genesis 49 that a king would come from his line.

So, the stage is, this is a family from Judah, the family from Bethlehem, and Ruth, of course, a foreigner, marries into this family. So now let's go to chapter 4, and we see this genealogy at the end of the book. It takes us from someone named Perez, Perez, through generations down to verse 22, Obed fathering Jesse, Jesse fathering David.

So, the last word in the book is David, and clearly that's the godly king that's going to come in 1 and 2 Samuel. But who is Perez? Well, we see up in... He's mentioned up in verse 12, so let me come to him in a more indirect fashion. Perez is the son of Judah through Tamar, his daughter-in-law.

Remember, Judah's son died, Tamar's husband. She comes to Judah and asks him to perform the duties of the brother-in-law, even though it's the father-in-law, and he refuses. So, she dresses up as a prostitute and traps him.

He comes into her, she gets pregnant, and bears two sons. Perez is one of them. And so the first thing we can see here is the connection between David and, kind of in a roundabout way, Judah.

It connects David with the promises to Judah in Genesis 49, particularly verse 10, which says, The scepter will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from

between his feet, till he comes to whom it belongs. Undoubtedly referring to David, and then ultimately in the longer term down to Christ. But certainly, in the Old Testament, it's talking about David there.

And so, this is connecting David with Judah genealogically, but then also the promises to Judah that we see in Genesis 49. Secondly, we see the villagers coming together, and everyone comes together to the gate in verse 11, chapter 4, and it says, All the people who were at the gate and the elders said, We are witnesses. This is to Boaz and Ruth coming together.

And they pronounce a blessing. They say, May the Lord make the woman who is coming into your house like Rachel and Leah. And of course, Rachel and Leah are the two wives of Jacob.

So, it takes us back there to Jacob, and Leah is the mother of Judah. So, in a second kind of roundabout way, we have Judah in the picture here, who together built up the house of Israel. May you act worthily in Ephrathah, and be renowned in Bethlehem.

So, there's a reference to David obliquely through his hometown, Bethlehem. And then third, verse 12, May your house be like the house of Perez, whom Tamar bore to Judah. So, there's Judah explicitly.

So, I think several strands of evidence, some direct, some indirect, at the end of the book, are connecting David and the events at this time with Judah and the promises to Judah. So, Ruth, Naomi, and Boaz stand in not a midpoint, but in a point along the way between the promises to Judah and a few generations later, the birth of David and his household. So, in that sense, it seems to me the book of Ruth is picking up on the theology of the book of Judges.

Judges is saying we need a king, we need a godly king. The book of Ruth gives us one snapshot into the life of the near ancestors of David, saying God is around and working, and it's a beautiful thing are working out, and it portends good things to come when David arrives. So, in that sense, the book is, besides just being a beautiful story, besides talking about family loyalty and so on, the welcoming of foreigners, it is also telling us about, it's part of the theology of monarchy that goes through the Bible as well.

So those are the major things I'd like to say about the book in terms of introduction. So, we'll now spend some time looking at the actual chapter-by-chapter exposition of the book. And so, if you have your Bible, open to chapter 1 and we will go through the chapters.

This is Dr. David Howard in his teaching on the books of Joshua through Ruth. This is session 31, Introduction to Ruth.