**RUTH**

**Faithfulness, Love and Care**

**What you need to REMEMBER:**

The Lord had promised that He would excise evil from the world through Abraham’s family. Among his offspring would be the Promised Child of Genesis 3:15. The coming of the Child was so vital that God went to the trouble of establishing a special nation for the Child to be born into. This nation was formed from the descendants of Abraham and became known as Israel.

In Genesis through Joshua, we saw how God fulfilled His promise of nation building by giving Israel a strong religious and cultural identity, a robust legal system, and a national homeland.

In Judges, we saw that Israel’s first steps in establishing a governmental system within their homeland didn’t go very well. The people kept doing ***“evil in the eyes of the Lord.”*** And, in His frustration, God brought consequential judgements against them. It was a chaotic, violent, and troubled time. But God did not give up on the project. It was vital that the nation be established in spite of the faithlessness of the people. Their faithlessness would in no way keep God from faithfully fulfilling His pledge to Abraham so many years before, ***“I will make you into a great nation, and I will bless you… and you will be a blessing… and all the people on the earth will be blessed through you.” (Genesis 12:2-3)***

God wouldn’t give up on the nation of Israel because they were destined to be a blessing to all nations by giving the Savior a place to do what was necessary to fix His broken world.

**What you need to KNOW:**

The book of Ruth is very different from all that we’ve experienced so far. It’s a wonderful story of faithfulness, love and tender consideration for others.

To the casual reader, the book of Ruth can seem randomly placed in the midst of the broad historical narratives that surround it. But Ruth actually introduces an important change of emphasis. With Ruth, the focus of the Older Testament shifts from the establishment of the nation to the establishment of the specific family within Israel to whom the Promised Child would be born.

It’s also a story that demonstrates and illustrates God’s love and concern for all the people of the earth. Ruth was an outsider. She came into the nation of Israel not by birth, but through her marriage to Boaz. Yet, it was from their bi-cultural marriage that The Lord would create the specific family within Israel that would bring the Promised Child of Genesis 3:15 into the world. Ruth and Boaz were the great grandparents of King David. It would be a descendant of David who would give birth to the Savior.

This brief account is an important addition to God’s story of redemption and is a turning point in the Older Testament.

**GET GOING…**

**Take a leisurely stroll through the book of Ruth.**