

GOD'S COVENANT WITH DAVID**Ruth**

Memory Verses: *Remember Jesus Christ, risen from the dead, the offspring of David, as preached in my gospel (2 Tim. 2:8 ESV).*

Background Helps:

With the story of Ruth, we transition toward the next covenant in the Bible, God's covenant with King David. As a brief review, thus far we have covered the following covenants in the Old Testament:

1. God's "covenant" with Adam (and through him with the whole human race)
2. God's covenant with Noah (and through him with all living things)
3. God's covenant with Abraham (and his seed, both physical and spiritual)
4. God's covenant with Israel (mediated through Moses and sometimes called "the old covenant")

Now the book of Ruth prepares the way for yet another important covenant, God's covenant with King David.

As Ruth 1:1 indicates, the book of Ruth takes place during the days of the judges. Last week we saw that "in those days there was no king in Israel. Everyone did what was right in his own eyes" (Jud. 21:25 ESV). (Notice the implied longing for a king in that verse.) During this period the lives of the people of Israel were characterized by gross idolatry and immorality. They were continually breaking the covenant that God had made with Israel through Moses. The faith and godly character of Naomi, Ruth, and Boaz, however, provide an exception to the general depravity that marked the days of the judges.

The book of Ruth narrates a classic love story in the Bible. In your telling of this story, however, don't miss the main point: that through the events and characters (including a Gentile woman, Ruth), God was providentially preparing the way, in the line of David, for the Redeemer of the world, Jesus Christ. The way the book of Ruth ends is with a genealogy. How boring, we might think! But this genealogy shows that Ruth and Boaz and their son, Obed, are in the line of the future great king of Israel, David (4:17, 22). (This is the first time David is mentioned in the Old Testament.) And Boaz, Ruth, Obed, and David are all mentioned together in the New Testament genealogy of Jesus Christ in Matthew 1:5-6. In other words, the story of Ruth plays an important role in the history of redemption. In addition, it seems significant that this story takes place mainly in Bethlehem, the birthplace of the Messiah!

Lesson Helps:

The book of Ruth is a great short story in the Bible. Here is a good opportunity for the teachers of all ages to use effective storytelling techniques included in earlier forecasts. (See the end of this forecast.) There are many significant lessons in this short story:

- God's providence (the whole story)
- God's steadfast love (the whole story)

- Family loyalty (1:16-17)
- Trusting God (Ruth 2:12)
- Roles of husband and wife in marriage (Boaz and Ruth)
- Sexual purity (chap. 3)
- The ideal woman (Ruth 3:11; Prov. 31:10ff.)
- Redemption (the whole story)
- Etc.


Each teacher should emphasize the truths that seem most appropriate for your class and age group.

In all classes, however, be sure to explain how the story of Ruth fits into God's covenant story. Show how the story of Ruth anticipates the rise of David, who will become the future king of Israel and with whom God will make an important covenant (which we will study in two weeks). Show how Ruth is privileged to be an ancestress of King David (Ruth 4:17-22) and, therefore, an ancestress of the Lord Jesus Christ himself (Matt. 1). And since Ruth was a Moabite, Jesus has Gentile blood running through his veins! The story of Ruth anticipates the wide scope of God's plan of redemption, including all nations of the world.

Use the memory verse, 2 Timothy 2:8, to tie this Old Testament story into the New Testament. As we will see in two weeks, the risen Christ is the fulfillment of God's promise to David of a Son who will rule on his throne forever.

Home Assignment:

 Read Psalm 78.

 Memorize Ephesians 6:4 ESV.

Storytelling¹

Storytelling is one of the most effective teaching methods, for children and adults alike. It is true: Everybody loves a story. But good storytelling is an art that follows some time-tested principles. How can you tell a good story? Here are some suggestions:

- Use picturesque, vivid, descriptive, dramatic language.
- Use dialogue between the characters.
- Leave out extraneous details (but sometimes details that seem extraneous at the beginning of a story turn out to be important later on). Be as concise as possible.
- Make sure the story is clearly and logically presented in a manner appropriate to the age level of your audience.
- Arouse interest at the beginning of the story.
- Use questions from time to time to hold the attention of your audience.
- Use visual aids, if appropriate.
- Make sure your story has a point and conveys that point to the audience.
- *Above all, do not merely report the story, but relive the story by dramatic use of both voice and body.* (To achieve this effect, the teacher must know the story thoroughly and enter into the plot through the use of imagination.)
- Use the basic narrative plan as portrayed in the following diagram:

¹ Jay Adams, *Pulpit Speech* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1971), 21-40.

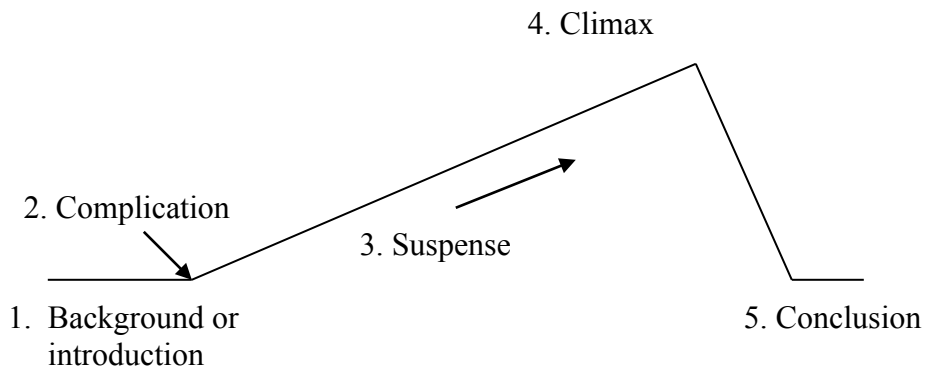


Fig. 1

There are five elements to the basic narrative plan: (1) the background or introductory material; (2) the introduction of some complication or problem; (3) suspense which builds through new complications, failures to solve the original problem, or new insights into the problem; (4) a climax or solution to the problem or problems; and (5) if necessary, a brief conclusion. The teacher is advised to read through the story of Esther in the Bible to see an example of masterful use of this narrative plan and a truly great story.