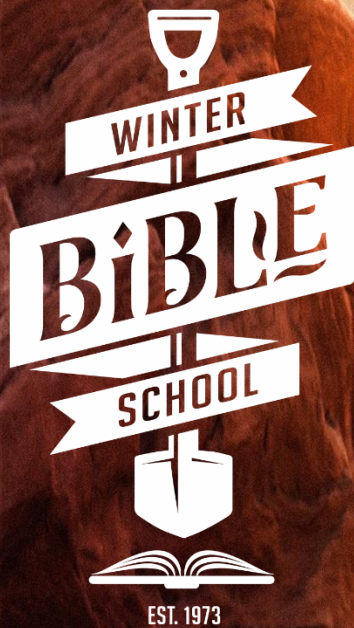


2019



A living faith:

FOR NOW ...

AND THEN

JOSHUA, JUDGES & RUTH

GREG BURGESS

Structure

The structure of Joshua is pretty straight forward. Madvig's outline is as good as any:

Madvig's Outline (EBC, 2:244)

- I. God's promises to Israel were fulfilled in the conquest of the land (chs. 1-12)
- II. God's promises to Israel were fulfilled in the division of the land (chs. 13-22)
- III. Exhortation to Israel to remain faithful to the Lord and so enjoy the blessings of the land (chs. 23-24)

Israel's initial success in entering Canaan (Joshua 1-8)

- a opening focus on "Book of the law of Moses" (1:1-18)
- b encouragement from a believing Canaanite: Rahab hides spies (2:1-24)
- c Jordan "stands up"! Yahweh miraculously enables Israel to...enter Canaan (3-4:24)
- d **CENTER: Israel worships Yahweh in Promised Land** (5:1-15)
- c' Jericho falls down! Yahweh miraculously enables Israel to...enter...Jericho (6:1-27)
- b' discouragement from a faithless Israelite: Achan hides plunder (7:1-8:29)
- a' closing focus on "Book of the Law of Moses" (8:30-35)

(Dorsey, p.91)

Some Significant Themes

(1) Israel and the Land

God had promised Abraham the Land. These promises were passed on to his descendants and reiterated to Moses (Deut. 1:8; 6:10,18; 7:8). Joshua 1-12 records the [beginning of the] fulfilment of this promise while chapters 13-23 record the distribution of the land. Chapters 13-22 constitute a hymn of praise to God for giving Israel the land he had promised (Dillard, 114).

(2) The Unity of Israel

Deuteronomy addresses itself to 'all Israel' (5:1, 3; 11:6; 29:9), and Joshua does the same (3:7,17; 4:14; 7:23-24; 24:1). "All the tribes participated in punishing transgression (Deut. 13:10; Josh. 7:25) and in the nation's war of conquest. The nation was a union of twelve tribes acting in concert (18:2), each receiving a part of the inheritance (chaps. 13-21), each commemorated in a pile of stones near Gilgal (chap. 4). The trans-Jordan tribes erect an altar as a visible symbol of their unity with the other tribes (chap. 22)." (Dillard, 115)

(3) The Leadership of Joshua

The leadership of Joshua parallels that of Moses throughout the book. Joshua rules according to the book of the law Moses had written (1:8-9). He crosses the Jordan as Moses crossed the Red Sea (3:4). Both removed their shoes in the presence of God (5:15 cf. Ex 3:5). Both intercede for the nation when they have sinned (7:7-9; cf. Deut 9:25-29). Both lead in the observance of Passover (5:10-11). Both have military victories (Moses in 12:1-6; Joshua in 12:7-24). Both make provision for the allotment of land (Moses in 13:8-32; Joshua in 14:1f). (Dillard, 115)

But note the stark difference in leadership that sets up the massive decline in the nation's fortunes: "...at

the death of Moses, preparations had been made for the transfer of leadership to Joshua (Deut. 3 1:1-8; 34:9), but at the death of Joshua, no provisions are made for a succession of leadership. We are left with a people in the land, but without a leader to guide them so that they will serve the Lord. What will become of this situation? That is the story of the Judges.” (Dillard, 113)

(4) The Working out of the Mosaic Covenant

Joshua shows how Israel lived life under the covenant (cf. Dillard, p.115)

| <i>Issue</i> | <i>Deuteronomy</i> | <i>Joshua</i> |
|---|----------------------------------|--|
| <i>No one can withstand Israel</i> | <i>11:25</i> | <i>1:5</i> |
| <i>Leading into the promised rest</i> | <i>3:20; 12:10; 25:19</i> | <i>1:13, 15; 14:15; 21:44; 22:4; 23:1</i> |
| <i>Punishment of apostates</i> | <i>13</i> | <i>7:25</i> |
| <i>Covenant renewal</i> | <i>27:1-8</i> | <i>8:30-35</i> |
| <i>Dealing with nations that surrender</i> | <i>20:10-11</i> | <i>9:23-27</i> |
| <i>Dealing with those hung on a tree</i> | <i>21:23</i> | <i>10:27</i> |
| <i>Anakim are wiped out</i> | <i>9:2</i> | <i>11:21</i> |
| <i>Cursings blessings</i> | <i>28</i> | <i>23:14-16</i> |
| <i>‘hornet’ expels the enemy</i> | <i>7:20</i> | <i>24:12</i> |
| <i>Prediction of Israel’s unfaithfulness</i> | <i>31:15-29</i> | <i>24:19-20</i> |

(5) The Character of God

The book of Joshua reveals God as:

- Faithfully keeping covenant with his people;
- Holy, driving out the Canaanites due to their sin and punishing Achan;
- Gracious, in redeeming Rahab and forgiving the Israelites;
- Sovereign, in the performing of many miracles
- Warrior, cf. Ex 15:3 and Josh 5

Some Points of Interest

(1) Authorship: written shortly after the events (cf. 6:25; 24:26), though perhaps some time had elapsed (cf. “to this day” 4:9; 5:9; 6:25; 7:26; 8:28-29; 9:27; 10:27; 13:13; 15:63; 16:10)

(2) The date of the Conquest: Some suggest the archaeological evidence points to around 1250 B.C. but there is good reason to hold to the traditional date of somewhere around 1400 B.C.

(3) The nature of the Conquest: Some suggest the conquest was more like a passive immigration or a peasant revolt. However, the text points to an initial unified assault on the land by Israel then mop up operations were left to individual tribes.

(4) Joshua’s long day (10:12-15): literal or metaphorical?

(5) The Annihilation of the Canaanites:

Some New Testament Connections

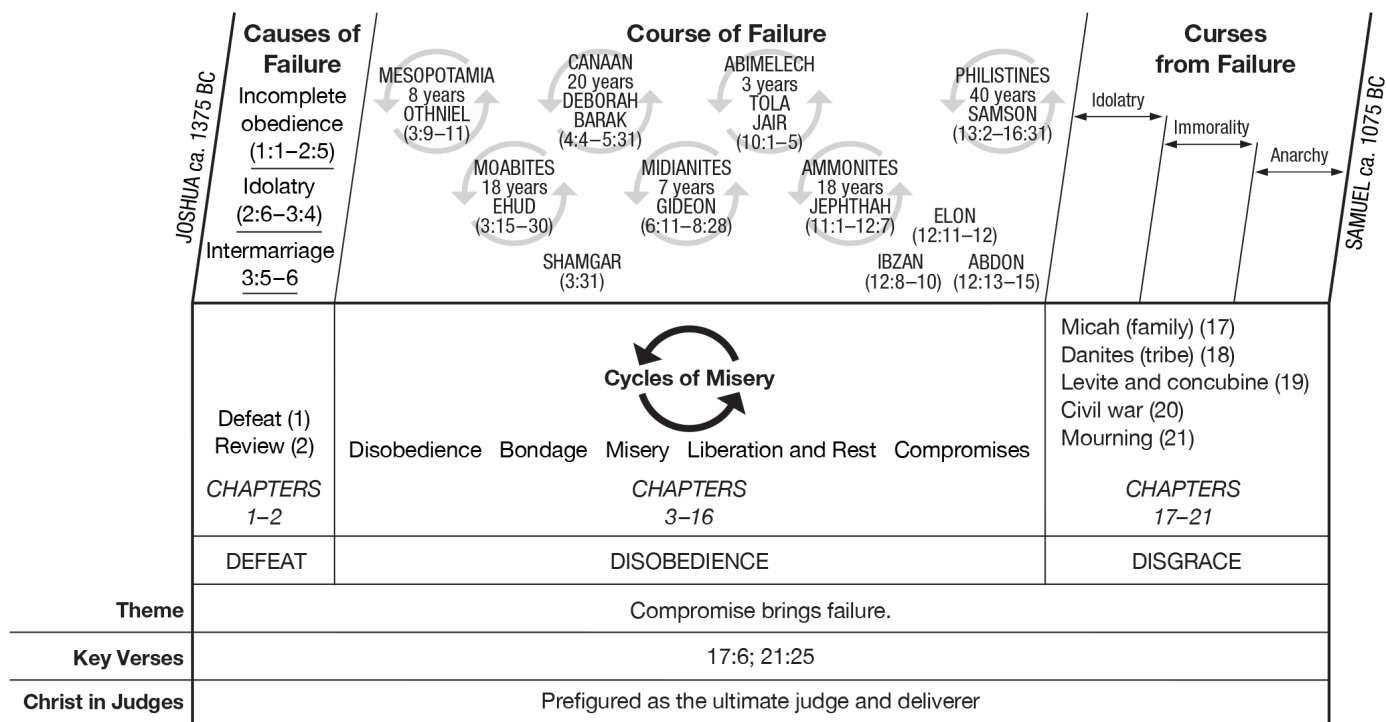
(1) Promise of Rest (Heb 3:11, 18; 4:1-11)

(2) Models of Faith (Heb 11:30-31)

(3) Jesus, the Warrior King (Joshua 5:13-15 cf. Rev 19:11-16)

Structure

(1) Swindoll's Book Chart (1:62)



(2) The Arrangement of the Judges

The order of the judges mentioned in the book follow a definite pattern. Hamilton sees a progression from superior south to inferior north, Dillard refers to it as a downward spiral, while Dorsey not surprisingly sees the arrangement as a chiasm.

Hamilton (p.100)

Tribes in Joshua 1

Dan (v.34)
 ↑
 Naphtali (v.33)
 ↑
 Asher (vv.31-32)
 ↑
 Zebulun (v.30)
 ↑
 Ephraim (v.29)
 ↑
 Manasseh (vv.27-28)
 ↑
 House of Joseph (v.22-26)
 ↑
 Benjamin (v.21)
 ↑
 Judah (vv.2-10)

Judges in Joshua 3-16

Samson, from Dan (13:1-16:31)
 ↑
 Jephthah, from Manasseh (10:6-12:7)
 ↑
 Gideon, from Manasseh (6:1-8:35)
 ↑
 Deborah, from Ephraim (4:1-5:31)
 ↑
 Ehud, from Benjamin (3:12-30)
 ↑
 Othniel, from Judah (3:7-11)

Six of the accounts of the judges follow the cycle of sin, judgment, repentance and deliverance (i.e. Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Gideon, Jephthah, Samson). Dillard calls it a downward spiral:

“- *Othniel* (3:7-11) appears as a model of what a judge should be. Raised up by God, under the control of his Spirit, and a proven warrior under Joshua (Josh 15:13-19) he leads Israel in successful warfare.

- *Ehud* (3:12-30) has no mention of being raised up by God, controlled by his spirit and does not judge Israel. He delivers Israel through deceit and treachery and there is no mention of God's will and relationship to him.

- *Deborah* (4:1-5:31) raised questions about the absence/failure of male leadership in the land. Both Barak and Sisera lose the glory that should have been theirs to a woman (4:9). Victory is again secured via treachery, by a half-Israelite woman! Deborah's song rather than extolling a nation's victory condemns other tribes who did not join the fray.

- *Gideon* the farmer (6:1-9:56) is slow to recognize and respond to God's call...his obedience...is not exactly courageous: he does tear down the Baal altar and the Asherah pole...but he is still a bit the coward and skeptic, as he does it by night (6:25-27...)...he himself eventually succumbs to false worship that leads Israel astray (8:22-27). After...[his 300 men win]...he seems to forget the whole point of the exercise (7:2) and calls up his reserves...A great victory once again erupts into factional rivalry and quarrelling among the tribes and clans (8:1-9). Beyond the victory...Gideon pursues a personal vendetta (vv:10-21). The story had begun with concern about the seed Israel had sown (6:2); Gideon had sown his own seed widely and had seventy sons, including one by a concubine from Shechem (8:31).

- *Jephthah* (10:6-12:7) was full of self-interest that helped him to gain power (11:1-11). Although God's Spirit had come upon him, he still makes a rash vow, as if more were needed to secure victory. He ends up destroying his own child. Victory erupts into intertribal squabbling (12:1-6).

- *Samson* (13:1-16:31) is a shadow of what a judge should be. "He is full of self-indulgence and refuses to control his sexual appetite. Samson's proclivity for foreign women has become metaphorical for Israel herself, unwilling to resist going whoring after the enticement of foreign gods (2;17; 8:27,33). Although, like Israel, he had been set apart to God from his birth (13:5), Samson would not fulfill his potential...he was more successful in death than in life (16:30)." (126)

The book ends with a question: will kingship resolve Israel's religious, moral and social ills?

Some Significant Themes

(1) The administration of God's rule over his people

God was to be Israel's king and Lord (8:23), but how was this to be played out in history? The theocracy under Moses and Joshua had its problems, now a period of decentralized power where individual judges reigned for a time has failed, now it comes time to try the monarchy. As Howard writes, "The book of Judges argues that Israel needed a king." (p.120) This the book does by (1) picturing life under the Judges as a downward spiral leading to utter spiritual and moral bankruptcy and (2) repeating the phrases "in those days there was no king in Israel" (17:6; 18:1; 19:1; 21:25) and "every man did what was right in his own eyes" (17:6; 21:25).

(2) Grace and law

"God's relationship with Israel is at once both conditional and unconditional. He will not remove his favor, but Israel must live in obedience and faith to inherit the promise." (Dillard, 127). Yet ultimately while Israel proves herself to be apostate and unbelieving, God proves himself to be faithful.

(3) The land

Judges seeks to explain why Israel had failed to possess the land completely, namely because of the nation's disobedience. Commenting on Joshua 1, Hamilton notes the obvious degeneration portrayed from verses 22-36:

- "1. Victory, however mitigated, for the house of Joseph (vv.22-26)
2. Dominance, but not expulsion, by Manasseh and Ephraim: Canaanites continue to live in the land (vv.27-28)
3. Dominance, but not expulsion, by Ephraim: Canaanites live among them (v.29)
4. same with Zebulun (v.30)
5. Asher and Naphtali live among the Canaanites (vv.31-33)
6. Dan repulsed by the Canaanites/Amorites, and confined to the hill country (v.34)

Thus, the move is from victory (1) to partial victory (2, 3, 4), to substantial losses (5), to defeat (6). What begins in triumph (1) ends in confinement (6)." (p.103)

(4) The leadership of Judah

"The repetition of the 'leadership of Judah' theme appears at the beginning and end of the Book of Judges, creating a strong inclusio frame. At the beginning of the book, when the Israelites begin to attack the remaining Canaanite cities, the nation asks the Lord, 'Who shall go up first to fight against the Canaanites?' and the Lord responds, 'Judah shall go up first' (Jdgs 1:1b-2). At the end of the book, when the Benjaminites have created a civil war against the other tribes, the tribes ask the Lord, 'Who shall go up first for us to fight against the Benjaminites?' and the Lord responds, 'Judah shall go up first' (Jdgs 20:18). This inclusio creates several key rhetorical effects. First, the tribe of Judah is brought to the fore as the leader among the tribes. Second, the reversal of foes – from Canaanites to the Benjaminites – traces the downfall of the nation; they start by fighting against the Canaanites, but end fighting against themselves. A secondary inclusio is also created by the focus on the military failure of the tribe of Benjamin in chapters 20-21. Taken together, the inclusio highlights the leadership and success of the tribe of Judah versus the abject failure of the tribe of Benjamin. In light of the fact that the book was probably written early in the period of the monarchy but before David took Jerusalem (as indicated by 1:21), it is possible that these twin themes were designed to address the conflict between David (who was descended from the tribe of Judah) and Saul (who was descended from the tribe of Benjamin)." (Chisholm, 103 DTS Notes)

Some Points of Interest

(1) The Place of Deborah

"At the very beginning of the poem, Deborah is described in the Hebrew in a way that calls the reader's attention to the fact that she is a woman... 'And Deborah, a prophet-woman ['ishshah nevi'ah], Lepidoth's woman, she was judging Israel at that time. And she would sit under the palm tree of Deborah...' Alter observes that what is odd about these initial clauses in the Deborah story is the emphasis on feminine gender and on the term woman...the 'stylistic bumpiness' at the beginning of the story is intended to bump our sensibility as an audience. It is the rare exception to have a prophetess rather than a prophet, a female judge rather than a male judge. Thus, we have been alerted that a reversal of roles between female and male will be at the heart of the story, with Deborah's role as commander perfectly complemented by Jael's role at the end as assassin of the enemy general (Alter 1992:41)." (Frick, 283)

(2) How long was this period?

What was the length of the Judges period? If the years each judge reigned are added together and one assumes consecutive rules, the period is 390 years (410 yrs Dillard). But since the judges were more local than national, it is likely some ruled concurrently. The shortest length would be about 150 years. Given the reign of Saul began around 1050, it is easy to see how the time period covered by the judges could accommodate either a 13th or 15th century date for the Exodus.

(3) Jephthah's Vow

In a rash vow to God, Jephthah promised to sacrifice to God the first thing/person that greeted him on his return after victory (11:30-31). God gave him victory and who should greet him on his return but his beloved only daughter (11:34-40). But the text doesn't say Jephthah killed her, simply that he carried out his vow. So what happened? There are two possibilities:

(a) The sacrifice involved a life of perpetual virginity - she was dedicated to the Lord (cf. Hannah's dedication of Samuel). This avoids the horrid thought of an Israelite being involved in human sacrifice and accords with the daughter bewailing her virginity in 11:37-38. Jephthah's mourning would then be due to the sure extinction of his name since she was an only child.

(b) Jephthah offered her up as a burnt offering (cf. Abraham and Isaac), which would make more sense of the mourning that followed (11:37-40).

(4) Israelites Violently Killed (Hamilton, p.169)

| The violently killed | Perpetrator | Reference |
|---|--------------|-------------|
| 70 sons of Jerubbaal | Abimelech | 9:5 |
| Abimelech | A woman | 9:53 |
| A daughter | Jephthah | 11:39 |
| 42,000 Ephramites | Jephthah | 12:6 |
| Samson | Samson | 16:30 |
| 40,030 Israelites | Benjaminites | 20:21,25,31 |
| 25,000 Benjaminites | Israelites | 20:46 |
| Men, women, children from Jabesh-gilead | Israelites | 21:10-11 |

"The evidence is clear. Every Israelite in Judges who dies violently at the hand of another dies at the hand of a fellow Israelite! No Israelite is said to be put to death by any Midianite or Moabite or Philistine. It is a book about kindred killing kindred."

Some New Testament Connections

(1) Models of faith

Dillard (p.127) is worth quoting at length here, “What a collection of human beings in the book of Judges! Strange heroes they are- a reluctant farmer, a prophetess, a left-handed assassin, a bastard bandit, a sex-addicted Nazarite, and others...For all their flaws, we are to learn from their faith. For it was in faith that Gideon, Barak, Jephthah, and Samson “conquered kingdoms, administered justice, and gained what was promised” (Heb. 11:32-33).

In spite of their failures their faith was not misplaced. They become part of that great cloud of witnesses calling us to persevere and fix our eyes on Jesus (Heb. 12:1-2). We too need a champion to fight our battles for us, one raised up by God and invested with his Spirit in full measure; we too need a leader to secure for us the inheritance that God has promised, one who will perfect our filth.”

(2) A treatise on total depravity

Judges is the darkest book in the Bible. More than any other it displays the depths to which depravity can plunge a man (Jdg 19:22 cp Rom 1:26-27).

The Best – The Book Of Ruth

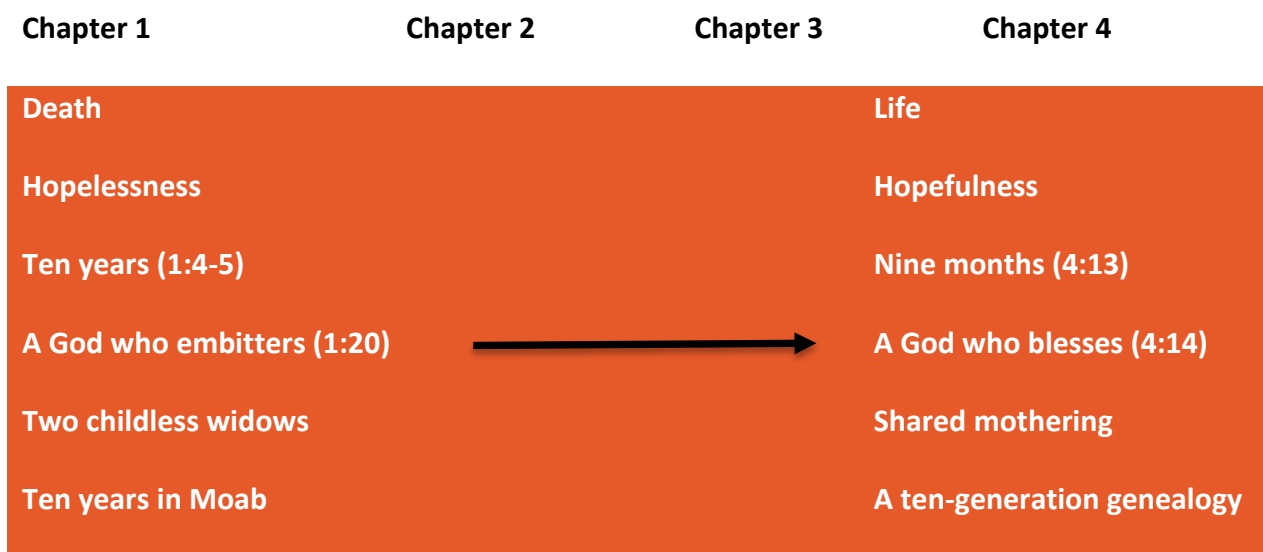
Structure

(1) Dorsey's Outline (p.126)

The book of Ruth is wonderfully put together from a literary perspective. Here is David Dorsey's outline:

- a Introduction: devastation of Naomi's family (1:1-5)
- b two of Naomi's relatives deliberate whether to support her (1:6-19a)
- c Return to Bethlehem in emptiness and hopelessness (1:19b-22)
- d TURNING POINT: meeting of Ruth and Boaz (2:1-23)
- c' Ruth's appeal to Boaz and her return to Bethlehem in fullness and hope (3:1-18)
- b' two of Naomi's relatives deliberate whether to support her (4:1-12)
- a' Conclusion: restoration of Naomi's family (4:13-21)

This chart from Hamilton (p.190) pictures the movement of Naomi from bitterness to blessing:



Some Significant Themes

(1) In Defense of King David

"According to Hubbard (42), 'the book has a political purpose: to win popular acceptance of David's rule by appeal to the continuity of Yahweh's guidance in the lives of Israel's ancestors and David.'...4:7...indicates that the book was written at a time when written legal documents were the norm and when the shoe-removal custom was forgotten...supporters of the house of Saul likely viewed David as a royal interloper and so his kingship needed 'legitimation.' Second, foreigners were a large part of David's power base. Ruth, a paradigm of a foreigner's commitment to Israel and Yahweh, would serve such a situation well." (Dillard, 131)

(2) God's subtle, sovereign providential care (cf. 2:3)

"...while God's name occurs twenty-three times in this brief book, the narrator uses it only twice. It is through this subtlety that the book instructs its readers concerning God's ongoing work in the life of ordinary people...As Hals points out, the verse [2:3b] means the exact opposite of what it seems to say. 'The labelling of Ruth's meeting with Boaz as 'chance' is nothing more than that no human intent was involved' (Hals, 12). No supernatural events or miracles punctuate the book of Ruth, but the attentive reader finishes the book knowing that God's had guided the events of this story as directly as the story of the exodus from Egypt...In this way, the book of Ruth functions similarly to the Joseph narrative and the book of Esther." (Dillard, 133-134)

(3) The supernatural provision of a leader

“...God’s hidden and continuous providence does more than highlight the wonderful rescue of Elimelech’s family. Although ordinary, the family produces one of the most important figures in Old Testament history: David. Thus the author says that David was a divine gift to Israel. In this way, the book of Ruth is analogous but not similar to the many stories in the Old Testament that narrate the births of other leaders of Israel. In each case, God provides the leader by overcoming tremendous obstacles (usually barrenness) to the birth (Isaac, Jacob, Samson, Samuel).” (Dillard, 134)

More than this the genealogy with which the book ends connects David with Judah (4:12) and thus with Abraham to whom God promised a royal lineage (Gen 17:6-8). David then is not just any old leader, he is the first King to come from Abraham through Judah and thus he is the beginning of the fulfilment of yet another aspect of the Abrahamic covenant.

(4) Blessing to/for the Gentiles (as per the Abrahamic Covenant)

“Ruth also hints at the fulfilment of the Lord’s promise to Abram that ‘in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.’ (Gen. 12:3)...the inclusion of Ruth in the Davidic lineage...[reveals]...God’s plan of salvation extends beyond the elect line of Israel as a foretaste of what will someday come to the nations through the Davidic line as the fulfilment of the Abrahamic promise.” (Wardlaw, p.40)

(5) Choices

- The choice of Elimelech to leave the ‘house of bread’ during a famine;
- The choice of Orpah to stay with her people and her gods;
- The choice of Ruth to embrace the God of Israel and stay with Naomi despite difficulty;
- The choice of the nearest kinsman to renege on his obligations for financial reasons;
- The choice of Boaz to fulfil his obligations as kinsman redeemer.

The choices of Ruth and Boaz were driven by faith in God and loyalty (hesed) to the covenant and resulted in divine blessing. However the choices of Elimelech, Orpah and the closest relative were made with an unbelief driven by materialism.

“The actions of Naomi’s family are... dramatic irony in the light of what a member of the covenant community should have done. For example, whereas in the Law famine was intended to lead to repentance, it instead led Elimelech to go elsewhere seeking food. Not only did Elimelech leave Bethlehem, but took his family to Moab, where Israel earlier committed idolatry on the plains of Moab (Numbers 25). Moreover, Elimelech’s sons married Moabite women. Whose children could not enter the sanctuary up to the tenth generation. This attempt to fill natural needs through natural means contrasts with Ruth, who operated by a second level of values found in the Mosaic covenant when she emulated the Lord’s mercy by committing herself to care for a poor widow in a foreign land without any hope of personal benefit...Yet in spite of their shortcomings ‘Shaddai’ protects and cares for them, and he fulfils the original promises to Abraham.” (Wardlaw, p.39)

Some Points of Interest

(1) Ruth, Tamar and the daughters of Lot

(2) How steamy was the threshing floor?

(3) Making sense of the ceremonies and transactions in chapter 4

(4) Ruth, David and Deuteronomy 23:3