The Book of Ruth is short. Really, really short. It only has 4 chapters, which means that it fits on two pages in a full-sized Bible. It reads like a short story, and therefore carries a lot less of the "preachy" stuff common to many parts of the Bible. Ruth tells the story of (surprise!) a lady named Ruth. Ruth gets married to Boaz, who begat Obed, who begat Jesse, who begat David, who "begat" (gasp) No! he didn't Jesus! The book of Ruth is a Hebrew short story, told with consummate skill. Among historical narratives in Scripture it is unexcelled in its compactness, vividness, warmth, beauty and dramatic effectiveness—an exquisitely wrought jewel of Hebrew narrative art. Marvelously symmetrical throughout (see Outline), the action moves from a briefly sketched account of distress (1:1–5; 71 words in Hebrew) through four episodes to a concluding account of relief and hope that is drawn with equal brevity (4:13–17; 71 words in Hebrew). All aspects of the story keep the reader's attention focused on the central issue. Consideration of these and other literary devices (mentioned throughout the notes) will aid understanding of the book of Ruth. Outline. Introduction: Naomi Emptied (1:1–5). The book of Ruth showed the Israelites the blessings that obedience could bring. It showed them the loving, faithful nature of their God. This book demonstrates that God responds to His people's cry. He practices what He preaches, so to speak. The book of Ruth came along at a time of irresponsible living in Israel's history and appropriately called the people back to a greater responsibility and faithfulness before God—even in difficult times. This call applies just as clearly to us today. We belong to a loving, faithful, and powerful God who has never failed to care and provide for His children. Like Ruth and Boaz, we are called to respond to that divine grace in faithful obedience, in spite of the godless culture in which we live. Are you willing?