

1. The Story of Ruth (No survey of the others and God's concern for them in the OT would be complete without knowing the story of Ruth. Ruth was the DIL of Naomi—an Israelite woman who moved with her husband away from Judah to Moab due to a famine. Once in Moab her sons married Moabite women—one of which was Ruth. In time not only did Naomi's husband die but so did both of her sons—leaving her a widow in a foreign land with no income and family support. Broken and empty she decides to return back to Bethlehem. She insists her DILs stay—no future for them as young widows in a country not their own, but Ruth is determined not to leave her MIL and accompanies Naomi—stating her famous words—where you go I will go; your God will be my God. Once in Bethlehem they find favor with Boaz—a relative of Naomi—who as a “kinsmen redeemer” {Deuteronomy 25:5-6} marries Ruth, even though she is a non Hebrew “other” and restores Naomi. Among those whose ancestry is traced to this marriage is David and also Christ. Ruth was indeed an other who not only found redemption in Israel and her God, but also found herself in the lineage of Jesus. Here are some things we can learn from her story.)
2. God's Care for the Other (If Ruth's story illustrates anything—it illustrates how God cares and provides for all—even those outside of his covenant people)
  - a. God is concerned about everyone regardless of race, nationality or status—Ruth 2:13 (Ruth knew as an other in Israel, she had no status—not even that of Boaz's servant girls. As a foreigner she had no legal rights—yet God thru Boaz demonstrated great concern for her. There is no such thing as an unimportant person in the eyes of God.)
  - b. Both men and women are equally important to God—Ruth 2:20 (the whole “kinsmen-redeemer” idea sounds strange to us, but it was really God's way in that ancient culture of making sure widows like Naomi and Ruth were cared for—Boa keeping Torah's teaching on hospitality to the others. Compared to other cultures, Israel, elevated women tremendously. Jesus continued this in his ministry—as did the apostles. God was metoo long before that was thing. In God's kingdom both men and women are valued equally—no male or female—meaning God sets women free from cultural constraints and delivers to them the same blessings and promises as men. Something not said about most cultures—even today.)
3. God Works Often in Mundane Ways (Just think about all of the little ways God worked in Ruth's story—they all added up to a wonderful ending. It was God's plan to bring this other into the lineage of Christ and he accomplished it not through some big miracle, but through daily life. Just think about that the next time you are wondering what God is up to or why he is not causing something major to occur. He could be using the little things around you in the same way to accomplish incredible things)
4. Christ is our Family-Redeemer (The parallels are easily seen. From this story of an other to her ancestor Christ dying on the cross for all of the others—it is God's redemptive plan in action—and yes, Ruth was a part of that, which we can share today—in much the same way: salvation/restoration/redemption from our lost plight. From the dusty, bitter roads of Moab to the warm welcome and embrace of Bethlehem—all are welcome.)
5. “Where you go, I will go, and where you stay, I will stay. Your people will be my people and your God my God.” –Ruth 1:16