

RUTH/THREE FUNERALS AND A WEDDING

Week 1 – Introduction

January 19, 2016

Why “Three Funerals and a Wedding”?

- The book of Ruth proclaims God’s entire plan of redemption!
- The entire Bible is written against the backdrop of marriage!
- “Three Funerals and a Wedding” - in the midst of sadness and sorrow, there is always hope with God – always a wedding!

The Hebrew word for HOPE is *tikvah*. It is used for the first time in the Bible in the book of Ruth!

In our study we’re going to:

- Understand the book of Ruth from a literal perspective – understanding the words within their context and within their cultural and historical setting.
- Understand the entire Bible in terms of God’s plan of redemption.
- Understand your part in that plan.
- Gain a new appreciation of God’s word. God’s word is an integrated message system. The Bible is one story. We’re going to see the big picture of the Bible.
- Gain more of an understanding of how the OT and NT connect.

The placement of Ruth is important to our study. It follows Judges and comes before I Samuel. Ruth opens – in the time of the Judges. . .

Ruth 1:1 - Now it came to pass, in the days when the judges ruled, that there was a famine in the land. And a certain man of Bethlehem, Judah, went to dwell in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.

Judges – time of apostasy/relativism/Judges 21:25 - everyone did right in his own eyes. . . . There was no king. There was apostasy (Gk word “apostasia” - renunciation of beliefs one had held; it can be considered abandonment or defiance of what one had believed). There was relativism - all points of view are equally valid and that all truth is relative to the individual – to each individual’s standard. Sounds like TODAY!!!

And what’s the next event on God’s calendar? **THE SECOND COMING – JESUS’ RETURN – THE KINGDOM BEING ESTABLISHED – THE KING IS COMING!**

The **PLACEMENT** of Ruth in the midst of Judges is insightful.

In Judges – there was no king in Israel and everyone did what was right in their own eyes.

In Ruth – God provides a **REDEEMER!**

In I Samuel – a King rules and reigns!

Ruth has been called a “romance.” It is a romance – but it’s a romance of **REDEMPTION**. **GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION** – the **GREATEST** love story ever told!!

“REDEMPTION” – (Hebrew – Goel/gawal – ga’al) – Strong’s – to release; to ransom; a loosing away [Col. 1:13] by paying a price; being bought out of the market place (bondage/slavery) Ga’al/Goel – “nearest kinsmen” - redeemer.

How did that look in Biblical times?

There was a kinsman-redeemer in each Jewish family. That person, the Goel – the nearest relative of another is placed under certain obligations to him. The Goel redeemed those in his family. HOW?

- By marrying his brother’s widow to beget a child for him – to preserve his lineage (Deut. 25:5-10).
- To redeem a family member from slavery (Lev. 25:47).
- To redeem the land from a family member who had to sell their land because of poverty (Lev. 25:23).
- To exact vengeance for a family member (Num. 35:19ff)

BROAD OVERVIEW: After Ruth’s husband, Mahlon (4:10) dies, she, Ruth, a Moabitess, a Gentile, follows Naomi her mother-in-law, Jewish, who has been living apart from her homeland – back to Bethlehem where Ruth ultimately marries Boaz, a wealthy landowner who is the hero of the story.

Overall theme of Ruth - THE GLORY OF GOD! The subtheme that runs throughout – WHAT THE LAW DIDN’T ALLOW, GOD’S GRACE ALLOWS!

Is Ruth a true story? It’s historical – it happened in history. How do we know? Ruth is in Jesus’ genealogy (Matt. 1:5)!! Ruth is the great grandmother of King David.

How important are Gentiles to God? God’s plan of redemption extends to the world.

- Gen. 12:3 – all the families of the earth would be blessed through Abraham and his descendants – through the Messiah.
- Isa. 49:6 – *Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, that You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’*

Ruth is a key book re: prophecy!! It is a foretelling of God’s plan of redemption, of salvation.

Biblical timeframe for Ruth: the events of the book of Ruth transpiring between 1370 and 1041 BC.

Ruth 1:1 - In the time of the Judges – NOT a glorious time.

- Joshua had died (Judges 2:7)
- On-going cycle of sin, divine judgment, deliverance, return to even greater sin.
- “No king in Israel” – we read that phrase repeatedly throughout the book of Judges.
- Judges ruled – Gideon, Samson, Samuel, Othniel, Ehud, Deborah, Jephtah)

- God raised up Judges (Judges 2:16) who were also called deliverers or saviors (Judges 3:9, 15). They served as spiritual, military and governmental leaders for the people but were often ignored or rejected (Judges 2:17) BECAUSE. . . “everyone did what was right in their own eyes” Judges 21:25.
- No absolutes – lots of relativism – apostasy.
- LIKE TODAY!

The setting of Ruth – GLOOM. And, in the midst of gloom we see GOD’S LOVE and His GRACE!!!

Torah – five books of Moses

Joshua – (first OT book with a name of a person) JOSHUA (which means the Lord is salvation) leads the people into the Promised Land!

Judges – 350 years from Joshua’s conquest – 1398 BC to about 1043 BC.

Ruth – events surrounding Ruth occurred between 1370 BC to 1041 BC.

I Samuel & II Samuel – took place 1105 BC to 971 BC.

King David – ca 1000 BC.

Readers of the book of Ruth: the JEWS!

Setting of Ruth more specifically:

- The Jews had already been given the law – 613 commandments (Moses on Mt. Sinai – 1500 BC).
- They were already in the land BUT NOT in ALL of the land that God had promised Abraham (Gen. 15) (and won’t be until the Millennial Kingdom when Jesus returns and sets up His kingdom).
- God – not the king; Saul – not the king. NO KING!

Ruth is during the book of Judges right before I Samuel. Ruth happens during a time of UNRIGHTEOUS living before the KINGDOM was established. The book of Ruth is at the threshold of the Kingdom. Are we living in unrighteous times? How shall we, we who are believers, then live?

II Peter 3:10-13 - *But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in which the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up.*^[c] ¹¹ *Therefore, since all these things will be dissolved, what manner of persons ought you to be in holy conduct and godliness,* ¹² *looking for and hastening the coming of the day of God, because of which the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat?* ¹³ *Nevertheless we, according to His promise, look for new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwells.*

What does our relationship with Jesus look like? Consider further - “Three Funerals and a Wedding” – BEFORE the wedding (in God’s plan of redemption, BEFORE we become the Bride of Christ), there has to be a death! Jesus died for us. In our walk with the Lord,

we are told to die to self! We are told in Scripture that we are being transformed into the image of Jesus.

II Cor. 3:18 - *But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.*

WHAT THE LAW DIDN'T ALLOW, GOD'S GRACE ALLOWS!

- What the law couldn't do (Rom. 8:3), Jesus did!
- The law is perfect (Psa. 19), reflecting Who God is; that's why imperfect men can't keep it.
- The law is holy (Rom. 7:12); that's why sinners are condemned by it (Rom. 3:20).
- The law is just; that's why it cannot show mercy to the guilty.
- The law prohibits; grace invites and gives life (Rom. 8:11).
- The law condemns the sinner because it demands obedience and we can't obey all 613 commandments faithfully (Rom. 3:20; Gal. 3:11); grace redeems the sinner (Rom. 8:1).
- The law curses (Deut. 28:15-68); grace blesses.
- The law shuts every mouth; grace opens the mouth to praise God.
- The law condemns the best man; grace saves the worst man.
- The law says, "Pay what you owe"; grace says, "I freely forgive you."
- The law says, "The wages of sin is death" (Rom. 6:23a); grace says "The gift of God is eternal life" (Rom. 6:23b).
- The law says the soul that sins, it shall die (Eze. 18:4); grace says believe and live.
- The law reveals sin; grace redeems sin.
- By the law is the knowledge of sin (Rom. 3:20); by grace is the redemption of sin.
- The law came by Moses; grace and truth came by Jesus.
- The law demands obedience (Deut. 28); grace bestows and gives power to obey through the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).
- The law was rendered inoperative (Gal. 3:19; Eph. 2:15); grace abides forever.
- The law places man under bondage to "do"; grace places us in the liberty/freedom of the Son of God Who said, "It is finished."

We are going to see a desperate Naomi and Ruth. Moving forward in our lives – God might've placed you in a desperate situation. How are you faring?

GTAA

GRAB the truth of God's Word
 THANK Him for the situation you're in
 ASK Him how you should respond
 ASK Him what you are to learn

QUESTIONS

What are you hoping to learn from the book of Ruth?
Did you have any V8 moments from the introduction?
What are you focusing on from this lesson?
Get to know one another!

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Read Ruth 1; zero in on Ruth 1:1-5