

RUTH/THREE FUNERALS AND A WEDDING

Week 2 - Ruth 1:1-5

January 26, 2016

BIG PICTURE OF THE BIBLE: The Bible is divided into four main headings: creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration.

v. 1 - “Now” – adverb which connects us to the setting – during the time of the Judges. . . **CHAOS!** Because of the times in which they were living – there were **CONSEQUENCES**. . . . Prior to the time of the Judges, Moses told them (Deut. 12:8) – “You shall not at all do as we are doing here today – every man doing whatever is right in his own eyes.” For their disobedience, they would be scattered (Deut. 28:58-67). **BUT** – Deut. 30:1-6 – future restoration – **HOPE!**

Observations concerning the famine:

- No reason given in the text.
- There was a famine “in the land.” No boundaries are given re: the famine. However, the “Judges’ rule” (“the rule of the Judges”) and the land are mentioned together – so it would appear that the famine hit wherever the Judges ruled which was throughout the land.
 - The apostasy covered the entire land – each area:
 - Southern – Judges 3:7-31
 - Northern – Judges 4:1-5:31
 - Central – Judges 6:1-10:5
 - Eastern – Judges 10:6-12:15
 - Western – Judges 13:1-16:31
 - Further, to confirm that the famine appears to have been throughout Israel (the entire land was sinning against God), we note that the family, Elimelech, Naomi, and their sons, didn’t travel to another location in Israel. They traveled to Moab – a foreign land – not part of Israel.
 - Moab was the perennial enemy of Israel – east of the Dead Sea. Moab is about 50-60 miles from Bethlehem.
 - And, the famine hit the land of BETHLEHEM, Judah (there were two Bethlehem’s; the other was in Galilee – 6 miles NW of Nazareth [Josh. 19:10, 15 – listing of cities given to the tribe of Zebulun]) because the family left Bethlehem, Judah due to the famine.
 - How ironic! They left Bethlehem – **HOUSE OF BREAD!**

Why the famine?

- God’s judgment (Lev. 26:21, 26).
- One of God’s severe judgments (Eze. 14:21).
- Israel’s sinning against God (I Kings 8:35).
- II Chron. 7:13-14
- Eze. 15:8
- Hosea 2:8-9

REMEMBER: THE PROMISES OF THE ABRAHAMIC COVENANT INCLUDE THE LAND THAT GOD HAD PROMISED ISRAEL/THE JEWS.

The Abrahamic Covenant is an unconditional/unilateral covenant. The fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is NOT based on Israel's obedience. The fulfillment of the Abrahamic Covenant is based on God ALONE. Heb. 6:13 – God swore by Himself. The Abrahamic Covenant is a unilateral covenant – it is one-sided. On God's side.

Have you ever noted in Scripture that there seems to be a connection between the children of Israel and the land and the Jew's rest (spiritual, physical, and rest from enemies) and the land's rest?? (Deut. 12:8-10; Josh. 11:23)

There's something about that land to God. . . God says the land is HIS – Lev. 25:23. (He has promised it to Israel – Gen. 12:7; Gen. 15:18; Jer. 25:5)

One of the functions of the KINSMAN REDEEMER is to REDEEM the land for his destitute, impoverished relative(s). God will REDEEM the earth – He will restore it to how it was in the beginning.

The land is crucial. So – we need to find what Scripture says about God's instructions concerning the land. . . .

- Lev. 25:1-7 – the people were to let the land rest one year out of seven years. “The land shall keep a Sabbath to the Lord.”
- Lev. 26:27-35 – Because the people disobeyed – God brought desolation to the land and “whistled” (Isa. 5:26) to nations (Assyria and Babylon) to carry the Jews into exile. Lev. 26:34 – THEN the land shall enjoy its Sabbaths as long as it lies desolate and you are in your enemies land!!!!
- II Chronicles 26:20-21 – and so the southern kingdom of Judah was carried away captive to Babylon for 70 YEARS until the land enjoyed her Sabbaths (490 years of disobedience – every 7th year out of 490 years of disobedience the land had not rested = 70 years of exile. [490 divided by 7 = 70])

God chose Israel – WHY?

- Recipients and custodians of the law.
- Witnesses of the one true God to the nations (Isa. 43:10).
 - THAT THE WORLD MAY KNOW THAT THERE IS A GOD IN ISRAEL - I Sam. 17:45-46; Joshua 4:24; I Kings 8:43; 18:36; II Kings 19:19; Isa. 52:10; Psa. 83:18. The world certainly saw God working on behalf of Israel and fighting for them; and people certainly saw the consequences for NOT obeying the one true God!
- Instruments of blessing to the world (Gen. 18:18).
 - NOTE: Rom. 11:15!
- Channel through whom the Messiah would come.

v. 1b – “certain man” of Bethlehem Judah

no name given here – no background – he just is. . . .

Beit Lechem – “house of bread”

Judah – “praise”

“sojourn” – Heb. “goor” – to turn aside from the road – intentionally!

Moab – about 50-60 miles from Bethlehem on the east side of the Dead Sea.

Moab – enemy of Israel.

Moab as a nation/people group - originated when Lot fathered Moab thru an incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter (Gen. 19:37) – after the destruction of Sodom & Gomorrah. Lot’s 2 daughters feared they would never have children – so they made their father drunk – and each had relations w/ their father.

Balak, the King of Moab, hired Balaam (prophet), to curse Israel

For 18 years during the time of the Judges, Moab oppressed Israel. IN FACT, Moab did not meet Israel with BREAD and water when they – the children of Israel – came out of Egypt (Deut. 23:4)

Moabites were not allowed to worship the Lord because of their hostility toward God and His people (Deut. 23:3-6) – even to the 10th generation – and FOREVER!

How does Ruth fit in? Is this a contradiction?

“WHAT THE LAW DIDN’T ALLOW – GOD’S GRACE ALLOWED” (Rom. 8:3-4)

God’s grace was operative in OT times. God’s message re: the RECONCILIATION of man and the RESTORATION of the earth is always one of HOPE!!!!

Ruth comes under Isa. 56:1-8, “. . . the sons of the foreigners who join themselves to the Lord to serve Him, and to love the name of the Lord, to be His servants. . . even them I will bring to My holy mountain and make them joyful in My house of prayer. .”

In Ruth, we see a family leaving a “paradise” (“Bethlehem Judah”) going into – as it were – EXILE – out of their native land.

Elimelech – “My God is King” - Melech – “King” in Hebrew; “El” – God; at the time of the Judges – when God was NOT their King!!

Naomi – “pleasant”

Two sons - Mahlon – “sick”; Chilion – “pining away”!!!!!!!!!!!!

If the book of Ruth is truly God’s plan – how does God’s plan begin (apart from the book of Ruth?) – with GOD! Genesis begins with God. There’s no explanation. He is! Period. SO, in the book of Ruth, we have this “CERTAIN MAN”

Re: GOD - He’s a personal God – “My God” – God created man for relationship.

God created the universe – He is King – He has dominion over all.

We see Elimelech - “My God is King” who married Naomi – “Pleasant”. In the Garden of Eden there was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil – and it was PLEASANT (Gen. 2:9). Satan offered Eve a “pleasant” proposition. We have My God is King. What

is a “pleasant” proposition by the enemy/adversary comes on the scene. . .thus. . .the fall of man; sin enters the world. AND – now we have:

Mahlon – sickly; Chilion – pining away

This is what happened after the fall – sickness and despair.

Ephrath – fruitfulness

. . . went to Moab – in essence – they went into exile – in a foreign land – and dwelled there! We’ll see consequences of rebellion against God.

“The experience of this Jewish family from Bethlehem is a beautiful picture of the entire history of the Jewish nation during the long years of her wandering outside the native land of Canaan. . . . It was a time when Israel was without a king. It suggests the days of Israel’s disorganization (exile) among the nations, before the setting up of the Kingdom.” “. . . when Israel is driven from their land and sojourning among the Gentiles.” *The Romance of Redemption*, M.R. DeHaan (Radio Bible Class ministry)

Elimelech dies. Naomi is now a widow. Ruth 1:3 – Naomi is “left” – Heb. word, *sha’ar* – to remain, to be left over, remnant!

“In the Scriptures the nation of Israel during her days of blessing in the land is represented as the wife of Jehovah (Jer. 3:14; Hosea 2:19-20; Isa. 54:5 – “For your Maker is your husband”. Isaiah refers to the age of Israel’s wandering among the nations as Israel’s widowhood – Isa. 54:4-8, 10. The book of Ruth depicts this truth.

Because of Israel’s disobedience, she has been scattered among the nations – but only for a time. . . . (Isa. 54:7)

So – sickly and pining away took wives of the Moabites - Gentile women

Should they – 2 Jewish men - have married Gentiles?

Joshua 23:12 – God speaks against making marriages w/ those nations remaining in the land – and includes Moabites

Ezra 9:1ff – upon returning to the land from Babylon, it was discovered that the people and the priests hadn’t separated themselves and they had married the “ites” including the Moabites.

I Kings 11:1-2 – Moabites are included with the nations that God told the children of Israel NOT to marry.

Orpah – stubborn/the back of the neck (stiff-necked)

Ruth – friend/friendship

Mahlon and Chilion both die – v. 5.

Naomi – survived her husband and her two sons while in exile (Deut. 28:62 – among the curses for disobedience ACCORDING TO THE MOSAIC LAW – including “you shall be left few in number”).

APPLICATION

Oftentimes we don't understand why God does what He does.

We do know that all that happens is for His glory – to accomplish His purpose.

Does God use trials in our lives to bring us closer to Him? Read James 1:2-3

Are we running away from what we KNOW God is telling us?

Are we heeding God or DISRESPECTING Him? There's no middle ground!

If we fix the fix God has for us, He'll fix another fix

Heb. 12:5-8 – we need to know that chastening is from the hand of a loving Father.

Phil. 4:6-7 – and we need to be thankful (GTAA)

Obstacles can become opportunities:

- Swindoll: "The greatest opportunities are often disguised as impossibilities. BUT – impossible to Whom?"
- No matter how desperate our circumstances may become, the only way is to face what God has allowed and trust His hand of mercy and provision rather than to run from the circumstances.
- We may not be able to choose our circumstances, but we can choose our attitude toward them – Phil. 4:11
- GTAA
- "When trouble comes to our lives, we can do one of three things: **endure** it, **escape** it, or **enlist** it. If we only **endure** our trials, then trials become our master, and we have a tendency to become hard and bitter. If we try to **escape** our trials, then we will probably miss the purposes God wants to achieve in our lives. But if we learn to **enlist** our trials, they will become our servants instead of our masters and work for us; and God will work all things together for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28)." Warren Wiersbe
- True freedom comes not from choosing our way, but from yielding to God's way.
- A cross experience occurs when our will crosses God's will and WE submit!

QUESTIONS

V8 moments?

What do you think of the meaning of the names?

How do you understand the famine?

What do you think of the family leaving Bethlehem?

What do you think of the family traveling to and then dwelling in Moab?

How do you understand the deaths of Naomi's husband and sons?

What do you think of the sons marrying Gentile women?

Do you better understand Israel's history?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread this handout. What is your view?

Read the handout for Ruth 1:6-22 when you receive it.