

RUTH/THREE FUNERALS AND A WEDDING

Week 3 - Ruth 1:6-22

February 2, 2016

The four main headings of the Bible: Creation, the Fall, Redemption, Restoration. Last week we saw the account of creation and the fall of mankind in the first five verses of Ruth, chapter 1!

When the book of Ruth opens, we understand that a family, husband, wife, and two sons are living in the time of the Judges and a famine is raging in Israel because of the sin of the children of Israel. The family from Bethlehem Judah, Ephrathites, “intentionally” left Israel for a country known to be unfriendly to the children of Israel – Moab. And, they settled in and remained in Moab “about 10 years.” This Jewish family is in EXILE in foreign territory. They knew that God had given them the Promised Land through the covenant He/God had made with Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3, 7; Gen. 15; Gen. 17). They knew that they shouldn’t have left the land. But, there was a PHYSICAL famine due to the MORAL famine (sin) and they left.

Additional support re: not leaving the land: Gen. 26:1-4 - *There was a famine in the land, besides the first famine that was in the days of Abraham. And Isaac went to Abimelech king of the Philistines, in Gerar. ² Then the LORD appeared to him and said: “Do not go down to Egypt; live in the land of which I shall tell you. ³ Dwell in this land, and I will be with you and bless you; for to you and your descendants I give all these lands, and I will perform the oath which I swore to Abraham your father. ⁴ And I will make your descendants multiply as the stars of heaven; I will give to your descendants all these lands; and in your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed;*

In Ruth 1:1-5 we are introduced to: Elimelech – My God is King; married to Naomi – pleasant. In Scripture we see GOD - Who is King – IS. He IS, period. *God is eternal.* God created. Satan entered the Garden of Eden – and Satan, the enemy, presented a “pleasant” (“delightful”) proposition (Gen. 2:9). A pleasant proposal from Satan!

Man fell into SICKNESS and a condition of PINING AWAY. The two sons of Elimelech and Naomi: Mahlon – sickly; Chilion – pining away. At the fall – when man sinned – we were thrust into the condition of SICKNESS and PINING AWAY. Consequences ensue. In the book of Ruth, Elimelech dies. . . . GOD doesn’t die. To Naomi, tho’, God is dead. Mahlon and Chilion marry two Gentile women, Orpah (stubborn) and Ruth (friend) – both from Moab. God had told the children of Israel NOT to marry Moabites – and other “ites” (Deut. 23:1-4; Josh. 23:12; I Kings 11:1-2; Ezra 9:1ff). Mahlon and Chilion – true to their condition – they die. We see creation and we see the fall of man wrapped up in the meaning of these names.

In the book of Ruth we see the history of Israel and we see the world being impacted!

Who represents Israel in the book of Ruth? Naomi

Who represents the Gentiles? Ruth

Who represents Jesus? Boaz – as the kinsman redeemer. The kinsman redeemer, as the “kinsman,” was in the flesh and carried out redemption for his family. God promised redemption and sent God the Son, Jesus, to redeem at a cost.

Redemption - buying out of the marketplace. A cost is involved.

God is unfolding His plan of redemption. God’s plan of redemption is about the Messiah, the Anointed One of God Who would come to earth and identify with man in His role as the KINSMAN REDEEMER – and pay the price for sin.

There is always a looking ahead in Scripture. There is always HOPE.

Unfolding of God’s plan:

Gen. 3:15 – first Messianic prophecy – the seed of the woman – the virgin birth Who would bruise Satan’s head (Heb. 2:14 – Jesus destroyed the power of death at His crucifixion and resurrection!)

Gen. 3:21 – God provided Adam and Eve with the skin of an animal to cover their nakedness. They had covered themselves after sinning. The fig leaves – didn’t suffice. Blood had to be shed – thus, the skin of an animal that had died!

Isa. 61:10 speaks of the garments of salvation.

Gen. 49:10 – the Messiah would come from the line of Judah. (We see a family from Bethlehem Judah. Boaz is from Judah.)

Dt. 18:18 – *I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him.*

This is God in the flesh – Immanuel – the Anointed One – the Messiah! (Isa. 7:14; Psa. 2)

Naomi was left – Heb. “sha-ar” – leftovers, remaining. We see her as the remnant. Naomi, after Elimelech dies, is a widow. Isaiah refers to the age of Israel’s wandering among the nations as Israel’s widowhood – Isa. 54:4-8, 10. In the OT we read that God is married to Israel through the Covenant He made with them:

Eze. 16:8 – *When I passed by you again and looked upon you, indeed your time was the time of love; so I spread My wing over you and covered your nakedness. Yes, I swore an oath to you and entered into a covenant with you, and you became Mine,” says the Lord GOD.*

Jer. 3:14 – ‘Return, O backsliding children,’ says the LORD; ‘for I am married to you.’

Isa. 54:5 - *For your Maker is your husband, the LORD of hosts is His name;*

Hosea 2:19-20 - *I will betroth you to Me forever; yes, I will betroth you to Me in righteousness and justice, in lovingkindness and mercy; ²⁰ I will betroth you to Me in faithfulness, and you shall know the LORD. (Speaking of the time of Israel’s restoration)*

In the book of Ruth we see three widows: Naomi, Orpah, and Ruth. All three are childless. To be a childless widow was to be among the lowest, most disadvantaged

classes in the ancient world. There was no one to support you, and you had to live on the generosity of strangers. It was a desperate situation.

In the book of Ruth we so clearly see that she who is left – Naomi – is pursued by GRACE! AND, God uses Gentile Ruth to be used in Naomi's life!

Ruth 1:6-22

Ruth 1:6-7 - *Then she arose with her daughters-in-law that she might return from the country of Moab, for she had heard in the country of Moab that the LORD had visited His people by giving them bread. ⁷ Therefore she went out from the place where she was, and her two daughters-in-law with her; and they went on the way to return to the land of Judah*

Naomi heard that the LORD (Jehovah) had visited His people by giving them bread. Who said, "I am the bread of life"? (John 6:35). Throughout the Scriptures we see that God revealed Himself to the Jewish people. But God the Father is Spirit (John 4:24); no man has seen God at any time (John 1:18); He is invisible (I Tim. 1:17). . . . When we see God appear, we are seeing a theophany – a visible appearance of God – a pre-incarnate/a pre-birth in Bethlehem appearance - of God the Son - of Jesus.

In v. 6 we read that Naomi arose that she might RETURN. Perhaps a foreshadowing of the Jews to the land? (Isa. 60:1 – arise, shine, for your LIGHT has come) Who is the light of the world? JESUS!

GOD has PROVIDED for His people. It pleases the Lord to bless Israel (Num. 24:1). WHY? They were disobedient and rebellious. BUT HE has a covenant with them and if He doesn't deliver on that UNCONDITIONAL covenant – guess what? God is then – unfaithful/a liar!!! Unconditional – the fulfillment of that covenant is based on God alone (Heb. 6:13). Unilateral covenant – one-sided – on God's side.

Consider the progression in Ruth - GOD FIRST provided bread (the LORD had already visited His people by giving them bread!) and then Naomi arose and RETURNED. We see God's sovereignty/man's responsibility. Might God be wooing Naomi? And, does this also sound "prophetic" - Jews coming out of EXILE – as GOD brings them back to HIS land which He has promised to them. "Returned" – 7X in NKJ and 9X in NASV in Ruth 1! Five times in NKJ in reference to Naomi returning to Israel. This is God's message to Israel throughout the OT – Shuvah Yisrael – "return Israel" – Isa. 55:6-7 – clear salvation message in the OT. We see an unrestored Naomi being drawn by God back to the land.

Ruth 1:8 - *The LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me.*

⁹ *The LORD grant that you may find rest, each in the house of her husband." So she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. ¹⁰ And they said to her, "Surely we will return with you to your people."¹¹ But Naomi said, "Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?*

¹² *Turn back, my daughters, go—for I am too old to have a husband. If I should say I have hope, if I should have a husband tonight and should also bear sons*

Naomi's desire was that her daughters-in-law find rest and security which is found in marriage – marriage with their future husbands. Naomi makes it clear that she would be unable to provide them with new husbands – because by the time she had any sons – the daughters-in-law would be too old. We need to understand the culture. Here we see Levirate marriage which was practiced in the culture (first seen in Gen. 38:8-9). We find it outlined in Deut. 25:5ff. Levirate marriage is literally a “marriage with a brother-in-law.” “Levir,” from the Latin, means *husband's brother*. The word *levirate*, has nothing to do with the tribe of Levi. In Biblical times, if a man died without a child, it was common for the man's unmarried brother to marry the widow in order to provide an heir for the deceased – an heir in the name of the dead brother.

In Ruth 1:13-15 - *Would you restrain yourselves from having husbands? No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!*” Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her. And she said, Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.’

In the text we see that Naomi is in the process of returning to Bethlehem in an unrestored state. The nation of Israel today is in unbelief – as a nation. Many Jews are coming to faith in Jesus. The majority are not. It's Scriptural that Jews are in the land in unbelief today – before the Millennial Kingdom. Eze. 36:24-27 – God will bring them to the land first and THEN He will put His law in their hearts – give them new hearts of flesh, not of stone – and will put His Spirit upon them.

Ruth 1:16-17 - Ruth is vowing loyalty to both the God of Israel and to Naomi and her people: *Your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.* It appears that Ruth has already trusted in the one true God – the God of Israel. It appears that Ruth had come to know God while Naomi (Israel) was in exile in Moab.

Ruth 1:18 - *When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her. Now the two of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it happened, when they had come to Bethlehem, that all the city was excited because of them; and the women said, “Is this Naomi?” Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.* ²¹ *I went out full, and the LORD has brought me home again empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and the Almighty has afflicted me?”* NOT to call her “Naomi” but to call her “Mara” – bitter (Ex. 15:22-27). I went out full and the LORD has brought me home again empty.” I think of Eze. 37 – vision of dry bones in the land before God puts His spirit in them. Are Naomi's words prophetic? Are they foreshadowing what is to come?

Naomi calls God, Whom she claims has pulverized her, she calls God the ALMIGHTY (Shaddai – the God Who provides – Who satisfies and strengthens; wrapped up in “Shaddai” is the idea of fruitfulness and increase) has dealt very bitterly with her. She recognizes that God is Shaddai – the nurturing one!? Perhaps she understands, at least, the sovereignty of God as she does call Him – “Almighty”.

Ruth 1:22 - *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab. Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.*

Notice that Ruth is labeled as “Ruth the Moabitess”. Though she came to faith in the one true God, she remains a Gentile.

Chapter 1 ends with “harvest time” A time of fruitfulness. A time of abundance. A joyful time. An “appointed time” – In Jer. 5:24 we read that God *reserves for us the appointed weeks of the harvest*. Appointed time means to MEET by appointment. What a beautiful picture of God’s heart. God is a personal God Whose desire is to meet with man – for relationship – for communion – for fellowship – and to meet to teach man His plan, God’s plan, for them individually and for the world. The feasts of the Lord that God gave to Israel are His “appointed times”!

Jesus speaks of the harvest at the end of the age (Matt. 13:39). Here we see Naomi (Israel) back in the land at harvest time – the end of the age! There were two ages to the Jewish mindset from the Scripture: The pre-Messianic Age and the Messianic Age. The “end of the age” would be the “end of this present age” – the end of the time BEFORE the Messiah comes specifically to establish His kingdom and to reign as King. We are in that time NOW. We see that time described in Lev. 23:22. God told the Jewish people - *When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not wholly reap the corners of your field when you reap, nor shall you gather any gleaning from your harvest. You shall leave them for the poor and for the stranger: I am the LORD your God.* The poor could be poor Jewish people. Who are the strangers? The Gentiles!

This was the barley harvest in Israel – the first harvest. The feast surrounding the barley harvest is called the Feast of First Fruits. The Jewish mindset re: the first harvest – as God has given us this first harvest, surely He will give us the second harvest. Jesus rose from the dead at the Feast of First Fruits – at the barley harvest!

RUTH 1

Prophetic picture: Israel is in exile, separated from God. The majority die. The one who is left, Naomi, returns to the land as the LORD has visited His people and has given them bread. Naomi returns in unbelief, bitter and empty. Naomi and her Gentile daughter-in-law, Ruth, return to Bethlehem at the beginning of the barley harvest when the land is flourishing again. The Gentile believer, Ruth, “supports” (befriends) Naomi, the Jew, upon Ruth coming to know God.

QUESTIONS

Your thoughts. . . .

Make sure that you support your thoughts with Scripture!

V8 moments?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK

Reread the handout

Read the Ruth 2 handout when you receive it

PONDER!!!

Write down your thoughts – and support them with Scripture!