

7. Jesus in Ruth

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The Book of Ruth is one of only two Books in the Bible that were named after women. It is a short Book that tells of a love story that happened sometime during the time of the judges.

But don't discount this Book as a mere love story, because I find at least three important things we must keep in mind.

1) This Book is the only one that provides the lineage of David to the Tribe of Judah through Ruth.

All the other historical Books in the OT assume that the readers know that David was from the tribe of Judah. This lineage is very important, because the Messiah was to come from the Tribe of Judah, and the genealogy of Jesus traces back to David through Ruth.

2) This Book shows the heart of God that desires to reach the whole world, not just the Jews.

Ruth was a Moabitess, a member of a cursed race due to their paganism and idolatry. But through the testimony of her mother-in-law and the faith in her God of Israel, Ruth discarded her own idolatry and came to God and she became in the lineage of Jesus Christ, the Messiah. This foreshadows our ultimate inclusion, as Gentiles.

3) This Book shows the illustration of the Kinsman Redeemer law.

There was the law by which a close relative could take over the right of inheritance and redeem the inheritance when the heir was deceased. This is the reason Jesus, as our Kinsman Redeemer, was able to redeem us. Humans were dead in sin to redeem ourselves, so Jesus took a human form, became one of us and paid the price for our redemption on the cross. Anyone who says that there is no grace and mercy of God in the OT, does not know the Bible, especially this Book, Ruth.

A. GOD'S GRACE THROUGH BOAZ

Ruth 2:4-7 Now behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem, and said to the reapers, "The Lord be with you!" And they answered him, "The Lord bless you!" 5 Then Boaz said to his servant who was in charge of the reapers, "Whose young woman is this?" 6 So the servant who was in charge of the reapers answered and said, "It is the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi from the country of Moab. 7 And she said, 'Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.' So she came and has continued from morning until now, though she rested a little in the house."

No sooner had Boaz greeted his workers than his eye caught the presence of a stranger in the field, and a lovely stranger you might add. It must have been love at first sight for Boaz. What you don't see here in the English translation, but they are in the original Hebrew manuscripts are a low whistling by Boaz and "Wow, what a babe!" From that point on, Boaz focuses his interest on Ruth, no longer on the harvest.

Many Bible students have seen in Boaz a picture of our Lord Jesus Christ in His relationship to His bride, the church. Like Ruth, the lost sinner is outside the covenant family of God, bankrupt, with no claim on God's mercy. But God took the initiative and provided a way for us to enter His family through faith in Jesus Christ.

On a side note, we must pay attention to something that Ruth may not have noticed, but the servant who was in charge of the reapers noticed how she interacted with the people around her and how humble she was. The unbelievers around us notice that we are Christians and we are under their constant observations.

Ruth 2:10-16 So she fell on her face, bowed down to the ground, and said to him, "Why have I found favor in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I am a foreigner?" 11 And Boaz answered and said to her, "It has been fully reported to me, all that you have done for your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and how you have left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before. 12 The Lord repay your work, and a full reward be given you by the Lord God of Israel, under whose wings you have come for refuge." 13 Then she said, "Let me find favor in your sight, my lord; for you have comforted me, and have spoken kindly to your maidservant, though I am not like one of your maidservants." 14 Now Boaz said to her at mealtime, "Come here, and eat of the bread, and dip your piece of bread in the vinegar." So she sat beside the reapers, and he passed parched grain to her; and she ate and was satisfied, and kept some back. 15 And when she rose up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men, saying, "Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not reproach her. 16 Also let grain from the bundles fall purposely for her; leave it that she may glean, and do not rebuke her."

I want you all to see a beautiful picture of the grace of God here.

- God made us be joint heirs with Jesus Christ. – Romans 8:17
 - Boaz took Ruth under his care as a member of his family.
- God provides all our needs according to His riches in glory. – Philippians 4:19
 - Boaz provided Ruth's needs without her knowledge.
- God protects us. – 1 John 4:4; Philippians 4:7
 - Boaz ordered his young men not to touch her.

B. NAOMI'S INSTRUCTION TO RUTH

Ruth 3:1-5 Then Naomi her mother-in-law said to her, "My daughter, shall I not seek security for you, that it may be well with you? 2 Now Boaz, whose young women you were with, is he not our relative? In fact, he is winnowing barley tonight at the threshing floor. 3 Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor; but do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. 4 Then it shall be, when he lies down, that you shall notice the place where he lies; and you shall go in, uncover his feet, and lie down; and he will tell you what you should do." 5 And she said to her, "All that you say to me I will do."

There are several things we must notice from Naomi's instruction to Ruth and Ruth's response:

1) Wash yourself

With regard to the Jews, the Law of Moses required ceremonial washings, and taking a bath and changing clothes usually preceded a special event. Actually, Naomi was telling Ruth to act like a bride preparing for her wedding.

Ezekiel 16:9-12 Then I washed you in water; yes, I thoroughly washed off your blood, and I anointed you with oil. 10 I clothed you in embroidered cloth and gave you sandals of badger skin; I clothed you with fine linen and covered you with silk. 11 I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your wrists, and a chain on your neck. 12 And I put a jewel in your nose, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.

If we want to enter into a deeper relationship with our Lord, we must cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God. When we seek forgiveness, God washes the record clean as it is mentioned in 1 John 1:9; but God will not do for us what we must do for ourselves.

Only we, as individuals, can put out of our lives those things that defile us, and we know what they are. It might mean cleaning out what we read; what we listen to; or what we watch. We must separate ourselves from whatever defiles us and grieves our Father in heaven.

2) Anoint yourself

Eastern people used fragrant oils to protect and heal their bodies and to make themselves pleasant to others. A bride would especially use fragrant perfume for her wedding day.

Anointing oil speaks of the presence and the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives. All believers have received the presence of the Holy Spirit within us as well as His anointing. Therefore we ought to be a fragrance of Christ to the Heavenly Father.

2 Corinthians 2:15 For we are to God the fragrance of Christ among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.

The more we are like Jesus Christ in character and conduct, the more we please our Father; and the more we please Him, the more He can bless and use us for His glory.

While here on earth, Jesus lived His life and did His work through the anointing of the Holy Spirit. If the spotless Son of God needed the Spirit's power, how much more do we!

3) Put on the best garment

I believe that though Ruth may not have a large collection of designer wardrobe clothes, she probably had one special garment for festive occasions.

In Scripture, clothing often carries a spiritual meaning. After they had sinned against God, our first parents, Adam and Eve tried to cover themselves; but only the Lord could forgive them and clothe them acceptably, and He had to shed blood to do it. The Jewish priests wore special garments that nobody else was permitted to wear. Salvation is also pictured as a change of clothes.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, My soul shall be joyful in my God; For He has clothed me with the garments of salvation, He has covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decks himself with ornaments, And as a bride adorns herself with her jewels.

4) All that you say to me I will do

Ruth was not only a hearer of the Word, but she was a doer. A willingness to obey the Lord is the secret of knowing what He wants us to do and being blessed when we do it. God does not expect us to understand what He does, but He expects us to do what we are told by Him through His Word or the counsels by godly people.

C. KINSMAN REDEEMER

Ruth 4:1-6 Now Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there; and behold, the close relative of whom Boaz had spoken came by. So Boaz said, "Come aside, friend, sit down here." So he came aside and sat down. 2 And he took

ten men of the elders of the city, and said, "Sit down here." So they sat down. 3 Then he said to the close relative, "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, sold the piece of land which belonged to our brother Elimelech. 4 And I thought to inform you, saying, 'Buy it back in the presence of the inhabitants and the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not redeem it, then tell me, that I may know; for there is no one but you to redeem it, and I am next after you.'" And he said, "I will redeem it." 5 Then Boaz said, "On the day you buy the field from the hand of Naomi, you must also buy it from Ruth the Moabitess, the wife of the dead, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance." 6 And the close relative said, "I cannot redeem it for myself, lest I ruin my own inheritance. You redeem my right of redemption for yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

Can you imagine how Boaz felt? I am sure that his heart sank when this close relative said, "I will redeem it." A major bummer. But Boaz couldn't give up yet. He pulled out his ace card – Ruth the Moabite woman came in a package deal. When the close relative said, "You redeem my right of redemption for yourself," Boaz said, "I need to pray about this. OK, I will do it." All that in a quick single sentence.

There is a word many Christians have heard and read numerous times in sermons, articles, and in the Bible, yet they may not know the exact meaning because they were not taught or didn't research it by themselves. The word is "redeemed". In secular terms, people may think about 'redeeming their coupons.' But spiritually there is a whole lot more than that.

According to the Dictionary I use: It means, "To buy back, to recover by payment or other satisfaction." But in a theological dictionary, it defines as "to deliver from sin and its consequences by means of a sacrifice offered for the sinner." Yes, it is a heavy duty theological word.

So what is the difference between 'ransom' and 'redeem'? Though both mean to buy back, 'redeem' is wider in its application than 'ransom'. To 'ransom' is "to recover a person from captivity by paying a stipulated price", but to 'redeem' "from sin by sacrifice."

It was the principle of redemption that God had written in His Word that gave Naomi the assurance that Boaz would rescue them. As a near relative, Boaz could redeem the family property that Elimelech had sold when he took his family to Moab. Naomi wasn't wealthy enough to redeem it, but Boaz could buy it back and keep it in the family.

However, something else was involved: The wife of the deceased went with the property. Therefore, the kinsman redeemer had to marry her and bring up children bearing the name of the deceased. They would then inherit the property, and the family name and family possessions would continue to be theirs.

Deuteronomy 25:5-6 "If brothers dwell together, and one of them dies and has no son, the widow of the dead man shall not be married to a stranger outside the family; her husband's brother shall go in to her, take her as his wife, and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her. 6 And it shall be that the first-born son which she bears will succeed to the name of his dead brother, that his name may not be blotted out of Israel.

This is known as "Levirate Marriage." The word 'levir' is Latin for "a husband's brother."

When it comes to spiritual redemption, all people with the exception of Jesus Christ who was God/Man are in bondage to sin, death, and satan and unable to set themselves free.

To explain this, I need to take you to the beginning first and the future later: The title deed to this planet earth was originally given to Adam in the Garden of Eden when God told him to subdue the earth according to Genesis 1:28. But Adam forfeited his right to ownership when he ate of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. You see, although Eve was tricked into eating the forbidden fruit, Adam's was an overt, a calculated act of rebellion, which is why the Bible speaks of Adam's sin as that which transferred to satan the title deed of our planet.

No human could buy the earth back because of the sinful nature we are born with. Does it mean that we are forever doomed? No, we have the Kinsman Redeemer of mankind.

This time we are going to go the future:

Rev 5:1-4 And I saw in the right hand of Him who sat on the throne a scroll written inside and on the back, sealed with seven seals. 2 Then I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, "Who is worthy to open the scroll and to loose its seals?" And no one in heaven or on the earth or under the earth was able to open the scroll, or to look at it. So I wept much, because no one was found worthy to open and read the scroll, or to look at it.

During the 7 year Great Tribulation time on earth in the future, the apostle John was witnessing this scene in the Throne Room of God in heaven.

If similar to other scrolls in John's day, it was made of eight-by-ten-inch sheets of papyrus, which were connected horizontally and wound around a wooden handle. We see a scroll written on both sides and sealed with seven seals, which can be perplexing until one studies Jewish history. This means that this scroll is unusual. It wasn't common practice to write on both sides of the scroll. However, we find numerous examples of a certain kind of document with writing on both sides and sealed with seven seals: a title deed to a piece of property.

Initially, a title deed would be written only on the smooth side and sealed with a single seal. But if the owner became unable to meet his financial obligations, he would have to relinquish his title deed – up on the backside of which would be written his debts and upon which would be placed seven seals. If at any time during the ensuing seven years he could pay off his debts, the seals would be broken and the title deed returned.

All of this explains what is in the hand of the One who sits on the throne here in chapter 5. It's the title deed to planet earth.

Before this Book of Ruth finishes its "Happily-ever-after," it gives a quick genealogy of king David to make sure that the readers would understand the Messiah's lineage.

Ruth 4:18-22 Now this is the genealogy of Perez: Perez begot Hezron; 19 Hezron begot Ram, and Ram begot Amminadab; 20 Amminadab begot Nahshon, and Nahshon begot Salmon; 21 Salmon begot Boaz, and Boaz begot Obed; 22 Obed begot Jesse, and Jesse begot David.

D. APPLICATIONS

1) Be still.

Psalm 46:10 Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth!

This is a wonderful antidote for our restless spirits. Interestingly, the Hebrew word translates "be still" as "take your hands off and relax." Our Lord can do just fine without our help, really.

2) He is able.

Philippians 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ

It encourages my heart to know that Jesus Christ is working unceasingly for His people as He intercedes in heaven, and that He is working in us, seeking to conform us to His perfect will.