

MESSIAH IN THE OT

Week 7 – God’s Plan of Redemption for the World

October 22, 2019

RUTH – GOD’S PLAN OF REDEMPTION FOR THE WORLD

WHAT THE LAW COULDN’T ALLOW, GOD’S GRACE ALLOWED

How do we know that the Messianic theme continues through the book of Judges?

Ruth 1:1-5 - 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. ² The name of the man was Elimelech, the name of his wife was Naomi, and the names of his two sons were Mahlon and Chilion—Ephrathites of Bethlehem, Judah. And they went to the country of Moab and remained there. ³ Then Elimelech, Naomi’s husband, died; and she was left, and her two sons. ⁴ Now they took wives of the women of Moab: the name of the one was Orpah, and the name of the other Ruth. And they dwelt there about ten years. ⁵ Then both Mahlon and Chilion also died; so the woman survived her two sons and her husband.

The time of the Judges was when there was no king and everyone did what was right in his own eyes. That was the rule of the day! Ruth takes place in the book of Judges. The setting of the book of Ruth is gloom! But God’s love and grace shine brighter against the backdrop of darkness. The book of Ruth is four-chapters – the book of Ruth covers God’s plan of redemption the world - for both Jew and Gentile through the kinsman redeemer. The Hebrew word for *redemption* is “ga-al.” It literally means to buy back; to buy out of the marketplace - those in bondage – those enslaved. Before we came to Jesus, we were in bondage to sin? Mankind is desperate. Mankind has a need to be redeemed. The entire book of Ruth delivers a Messianic theme! And, I’m suggesting that the subtitle for Ruth is “What the Law Didn’t Allow, God’s Grace Allows.”

We’re told at the outset of Ruth that when the Judges ruled there was a famine in the land. The famine is “in the land” – apparently in all of Israel. No reason is given for the famine in the text. Scripture, however, tells us that famine is one of God’s judgments (Eze. 14:21). It appears that because of the famine, a Jewish family leaves their home in Bethlehem, Judah of their own accord. They left Bethlehem (house of bread), Judah (praise). And they “went to dwell/sojourn” elsewhere. In Hebrew, “dwell/sojourn” means to turn aside from the road intentionally. They traveled to Moab outside the land of Israel, east of the Dead Sea approx. 50-60 miles from Bethlehem. God had given the Jewish people the land of promise. Why did this family turn their backs on God’s promises and leave? Or, did they turn their backs on God? And, Moab was the enemy of Israel! Moab withheld bread and water from the children of Israel after they were delivered from Egypt (Deut. 23:4). God scattered the Jewish people among the nations (in exile) due to their disobedience. This family was now among the nations. Could we understand that they would then be considered in “exile” – away from the land of promise that God had given them? We do know that during the time of Judges, the

nation of Israel veered from God. But, what of this family? Did they realize that they had a God-given responsibility to the nations? Moab was a Gentile nation.

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Ruth 1:2 provides us with the names of these family members. God has hidden away great truths in these names.

Elimelech (“My God is King”) is married to Naomi (“pleasant”) and they have two sons, Mahlon (“sickly”) and Chilion (“pining away”). The names of this family remind us of the beginning pages in Genesis: God IS. HE is sovereign and He created. Satan presented a pleasant proposition (Gen. 3:6) to Eve. The result: sin...fallen mankind that is sickly and pining away.

The book of Ruth outlines the very beginning of Genesis for us: creation and the fall of man. Elimelech means "my God is king." The Bible begins with God -- "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). The Bible never argues the existence of God. He IS – period! Elimelech married a woman whose name was Naomi. Naomi means “pleasant.” In the Garden of Eden there was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Scripture tells us that it was “pleasant” (Gen. 2:9). When Satan came to Eve in the Garden of Eden, he offered her a pleasant proposition. She ate of the forbidden fruit and gave it to Adam and he ate (Gen. 3:6) and sin entered the world! “My God is king” married “pleasure. We might consider that, in the marriage of Elimelech to Naomi, we have a picture of the fall of man. The sons of Elimelech and Naomi were named Mahlon and Chilion. Mahlon means "sickly" and Chilion means "pining away." “Sickly” and “pining away” sound like the results of sin entering the world.

While the family lived in Moab, Elimelech died. No reason is given for his death. And the two boys took Gentile women as wives! Should a good Jewish boy marry a Gentile women? And these Gentile women were Moabites! In Ezra 9:1 and I Kings 11:1-2, God tells the Jewish people not to make marriages with the Moabites as well as with other “ites”! But, what the law didn’t allow, God’s grace allowed. The Moabite women are Orpah whose name means “stubborn” or “stiff-necked,” and Ruth whose name means “friend.” “Sickly” and “pining away” die. Naomi, who is in exile in Moab, outside of the land of Israel, is left without husband and children. And Orpah and Ruth are left without husbands. In Deut. 28:62 God told the Jewish people that if they were disobedient they would be few in number. And, widows in that culture are desperate. They have a need!

M.R. DeHaan, (founder of the Radio Bible Class and co-editor of “Our Daily Bread”) in his book, “The Romance of Redemption,” summarizes the book of Ruth” in this way: “The experience of this Jewish family from Bethlehem is a 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. . . .” DeHaan is suggesting that the beginning of the book of Ruth is a picture of Israel in exile among the nations.

In the book of Ruth, we need to know that Naomi represents Israel and Ruth represents the Gentiles.

In the book of Ruth, in the midst of great need, God appears. . . .

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Ruth 1:6 - *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.* Naomi had heard that the LORD/Jehovah had visited His people by giving them bread, and she made plans to return to Bethlehem. This verse is prophetic! It’s looking ahead to Jesus Who came in the flesh to Bethlehem to visit His people. And this Jesus is the One Who said, “I am the bread of life”!

Ruth 1:7 - *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.* From the midst of exile, Naomi returns. “Return” is noted seven times in NKJV in the first chapter of Ruth and nine times in the NASV in the first chapter. When a word in the text is repeated, God is making a point! Israel who had been in exile is returning to the land that God has given Israel! After exile in Babylon, did Israel return to their land? YES!

Both Ruth and Orpah accompany their mother-in-law on her trek to Bethlehem. But, in v. 8 we see that Naomi encourages her daughters-in-law to each return to her mother’s house. . . . *And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each to her mother’s house. 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.’* Rest speaks of marriage. Orpah and Ruth insist on returning with Naomi. But, Naomi wants Orpah and Ruth to return to Moab. And, in verses 11-14 we find a peculiar statement from Naomi. . . . *‘Turn back, my daughters; why will you go with me? Are there still sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?’....* In this passage, Naomi is telling the girls that even if she had sons in her womb that very moment, Orpah and Ruth would have to wait many years for them to become their husbands. Naomi is referring to Levirate Marriage. “Levir” in Latin means “husband’s brother” (Deut. 25:5-10). When a husband died and left no children, the husband’s next of kin, his closest relative, was called upon to take his brother’s widow and provide an heir, a child, in the deceased husband’s name. . . . *No, my daughters; for it grieves me very much for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me!’* The word “against” in Hebrew carries the meaning of Naomi having received a direct/straightforward punch from God!

Ruth 1:14 – *Then they lifted up their voices and wept again; and Orpah kissed her mother-in-law, but Ruth clung to her.* Orpah kisses her mother-in-law and is out of the picture. She returns home and we never see Orpah mentioned in the Bible again! Ruth clings to Naomi. But Naomi's disregards Ruth's commitment... v. 15 – *'Look, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods; return after your sister-in-law.'* Naomi tells Ruth to go back to her gods? A Jewish woman is acknowledging many gods? But Ruth offers up a vow to Naomi: vv. 16-17 – *'Entreat me not to leave you, or to turn back from following after you; for wherever you go, I will go; and wherever you lodge, I will lodge; your people shall be my people, and your God, my God.'*

¹⁷ *Where you die, I will die, and there will I be buried. The LORD do so to me, and more also, if anything but death parts you and me.'* Ruth is vowing allegiance to the God of Israel AND to His people! She has come to faith in the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. And, she pledges loyalty to God's people – the Jews!

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Ruth 1:18-19 – *When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.* ¹⁹ *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?'* It appears that not every Jewish person had left Bethlehem when the famine hit. Some remained.

Ruth 1:20-21 - *But she said to them, 'Do not call me Naomi; call me Mara, for the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me.'* Naomi wants to be called Mara which means bitter. She's blaming it all on God! 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.'* "Almighty" in Hebrew is *Shaddai* which means to nurture, provide, satisfy!

Ruth 1:22a - *So Naomi returned, and Ruth the Moabitess her daughter-in-law with her, who returned from the country of Moab.* Naomi and Ruth return to Bethlehem as two destitute widows. In that culture, without someone coming alongside them, i.e. a kinsman-redeemer/close relative, they would not survive.

In Ruth chapter 1 we see Israel in exile – separated from their land; perhaps separated from God. The majority die. The one who is left returns to the land in unbelief (read Eze. 37). A Gentile is accompanying her (Isa. 49:22). Scripture so clearly supports this prophetic picture that we see in Ruth: Isa. 14:1-2 – *"God will still choose Israel (He's not finished with Israel) and will settle them in their land and the strangers (the Gentiles) will be joined to them."*

Ruth 1:22b - *Now they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest.* The barley harvest was the first harvest in Israel's growing season. Harvest always speaks to a time of abundance... a season of grace (Jer. 8:20) in Scripture. The barley harvest was called the Feast of First Fruits (Lev. 23:9-14) in Israel and it occurred during Passover week. Jesus was crucified on Passover and rose from the dead on the Feast of First Fruits – at the time of the barley harvest! Here is a foreshadowing of Jesus' resurrection. AND, whom do we meet in Ruth 2? Boaz, the kinsman redeemer in Ruth who represents Jesus.

Ruth 2:1 - *There was a relative of Naomi's husband, a man of great wealth, of the family of Elimelech. His name was Boaz.* Boaz is a relative – a kinsman – of Elimelech's (Ruth 4:3). Boaz' name means strength. Who is our strong tower? Jesus!

Ruth 2:2 - *So Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, 'Please let me go to the field, and glean heads of grain after him in whose sight I may find favor/grace.'* Ruth was destitute – she was bankrupt. Ruth went out looking for grace.

The Law of Gleaning offered to Gentiles was one of the Laws of Redemption. Gleaning is when a person walks after the reapers in a field. The reapers cut the stalks of grain. Gleaners pick up stalks that are not bundled into sheaves. Here is another picture of God's grace! The Jewish people were told by God not to entirely clear the corners of their fields in harvest time (Lev. 23:22). They were told by God to provide for the poor and stranger. The "poor" could be either Jew or Gentile. The "stranger" was the Gentile. The Gentile was given grace to come into the field and pick up what was not tied up in

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sheaves after the men cut the grain with sickles (Lev. 23:22). Ruth, the Gentile, was asking permission from Naomi, the Jew, to glean.

Ruth 2:2b-3 - *And she said to her, 'Go, my daughter.'*³ *Then she left, and went and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come to the part of the field belonging to Boaz, who was of the family of Elimelech.* Ironical that the word "happened" is used in the book of Ruth. Throughout Ruth we see God's providential guidance/His hand in every detail.

ENTER BOAZ – who comes from Bethlehem and greets his employees with. . .

Ruth 2:4 - . . . *'The LORD be with you!' And they answered him, 'The LORD bless you!'* We see a positive relationship between employer and employees. This seems to be very unusual for days in the time of the Judges when there was virtual chaos in the land.

AND BOAZ sees Ruth, asks his servant about her (Ruth 2:5-6). Boaz gives instructions to Ruth — *‘You will listen, my daughter, will you not? Do not go to glean in another field, nor go from here, but stay close by my young women. ⁹ Let your eyes be on the field which they reap, and go after them. Have I not commanded the young men not to touch you? And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink from what the young men have drawn.’* In Boaz calling Ruth, “My daughter,” it appears that there might be a large age gap between them. Boaz offers Ruth water from the vessels. Bible scholars have written that the privilege of drinking out of water jars was not customarily extended to gleaners. The gleaners were the lowest of the low. But we see grace being extended to Ruth.

Ruth 2:10-12 - ¹⁰ *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.’*

Ruth had come under the wings of the God of Israel. She had come to faith in Him. In Ex. 19:4, Deut. 32:11-12, Eze. 16:8 – we see that this word “wings” speaks of God’s covenant relationship with Israel. He has carried them on eagles’ wings, He has spread His wing over them and entered into a marriage relationship with them.

Isa. 56:6 - *the sons of the foreigner who join themselves to the LORD, to serve Him, and to love the name of the LORD, to be His servants.* (Matt. 23:37; Psa. 57:1)

Ruth 2:13-16 – Ruth was satisfied from Boaz’ provision. Jesus satisfies. Boaz is going beyond the letter of the law in his directions to the young men.

Ruth 2:17-18 - *So she gleaned in the field until evening, and beat out what she had gleaned, and it was about an ephah of barley.* An ephah was about 30-40 lbs. This speaks to abundance! ¹⁸ *Then she took it up and went into the city, and her mother-in-law*

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saw what she had gleaned. So she brought out and gave to her what she had kept back after she had been satisfied. Ruth shares with Naomi from that which has satisfied her!

Naomi asks where Ruth had gleaned! Didn’t she know as Boaz was a brother of Elimelech – a kinsman.

Ruth 2:20 - *'Blessed be he of the LORD, who has not forsaken His kindness to the living and the dead!'. . . 'This man is a relation of ours, one of our close relatives.'* Ruth, the Gentile, introduced Boaz, a Jewish man, to Naomi, who is Jewish! (Rom. 11:11)

At the end of Ruth 2, we have the end of the harvest time. Harvest time is the season of abundance/of grace. The Church age is the season of grace! At the end of Ruth chapter 2, the wheat harvest is completed. In Ruth 3 we find Ruth in a most secure spot.

Ruth 3

Ruth 3:1-2 – *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.'* Naomi is telling Ruth that since Boaz is our relative, you have the right, Ruth, to approach him. He is a kinsman-redeemer and can redeem you! He can marry you. Naomi is telling Ruth to propose marriage to Boaz! Naomi tells Ruth to go to the threshing floor. Threshing in Hebrew means “to trample”. Many times a threshing roller with metal studs was used to break up the grain. The threshing roller was called a Tribulum. Tribulation! Threshing in Scripture pictures God's judgment. In Ruth 3 we find Ruth in a very secure spot during the threshing scene which represents the Tribulation in God's plan which occurs after the season of grace!!

Naomi tells Ruth how to approach Boaz to get him to exercise his responsibility as her kinsman-redeemer. Ruth 3:3 - *Therefore wash yourself and anoint yourself, put on your best garment and go down to the threshing floor;*

“Wash yourself” speaks about purification for marriage (Eze. 16:9-10) when God spread His wing over Israel – when He entered into a covenant with Israel. In Ezekiel 16 we read that God washed Israel and anointed her with oil and clothed her and took her to Himself – He was married to Israel – “You became Mine.” (Jer. 3:14 – “I am married to you.”) Naomi then tells Ruth to notice the place where Boaz lies down and uncover his feet and wait for him to tell you what you should do. “Uncover his feet” – in the culture of that day, this was understood as an act of total submission. A servant would lay at his master's feet waiting for the next command. Ruth obeys Naomi. Where was the submissive Ruth during the threshing scene – during the tribulation? At the feet of Boaz who is a type of Jesus.

Ruth 3:8-9 - *Now it happened at midnight that the man was startled, and turned himself; and there, a woman was lying at his feet. ⁹ And he said, 'Who are you?' So she answered, 'I am Ruth, your maidservant. Take your maidservant under your wing, for you are a close relative.'* ¹⁰ *Then he said, 'Blessed are you of the LORD, my daughter! For you have shown more kindness at the end than at the beginning, in that you did not go*

after young men, whether poor or rich. ¹¹ And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do for you all that you request, for all the people of my town know that you are a virtuous woman. ¹² Now it is true that I am a close relative; however, there is a relative closer than I. ¹³ Stay this night, and in the morning it shall be that if he will perform the duty of a close relative for you—good; let him do it. But if he does not want to perform the duty for you, then I will perform the duty for you, as the LORD lives! Lie down until morning.’

Boaz is seeking Ruth’s protection. While he’s not the closest relative, he will approach the brother who is the closest relative and tell him of his duty. And if the closest relative will not perform, Boaz will perform the duty. Boaz LOVES Ruth! Ruth remains at his feet until morning and leaves before it is light. Boaz gives Ruth a measurement of barley...seemingly as a message for Naomi. Upon receiving the measurement of barley, Naomi assures Ruth that Boaz will not rest until he takes care of the matter re: the closest relative.

Who is this kinsman closer to Elimelech?

RUTH 4

In Ruth chapter 4 we find Boaz going up the gate and sitting down. Boaz left his work at the threshing floor to finalize Ruth’s redemption. This is Boaz’ highest priority. The gate was a public place where governmental issues were handled. Boaz goes up to the gate to take care of the matter in public. Jesus paid the debt we owed in public for all to see!

Ruth 4:1 - *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.* Friend – lit. means “so and so.” The closest relative does not have a name in the book of Ruth. Boaz takes ten men to sit with him and to serve as witnesses. Boaz then explains to the “so and so” that Naomi sold the piece of land that had belonged to their brother Elimelech. Boaz then tells “so and so”. . .

Ruth 4:4 - *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.’* Boaz brought up the land issue first - Naomi’s need. So and So said, *‘I will redeem it.’*

Ruth 4:5 - *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.’* Now Boaz brings up the issue of marrying the widow...a Gentile who is a Moabitess! According to the law in the OT, it was the widow who was to approach the kinsman-redeemer (Deut. 25:5-10). Ruth should have approached “so and SO.” However, BOAZ TOOK RUTH’S PLACE. Boaz underlying motivation – LOVE! “God so loved the world. . . .”

Ruth 4:6 - *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.’*

“Ruin” – corrupt/destroy/spoil. Redemption involves a cost. The friend was not willing. There is no explanation given in the text as to why marrying Ruth would destroy his inheritance. He could’ve been married. He could have had children and did not wish to include Ruth on divvying up his inheritance. “So and so” tells Boaz to “buy it for yourself” – to redeem the land from Naomi and to redeem Ruth by marrying her.

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Ruth 4:9-17 - And Boaz said to the elders and all the people, ‘You are witnesses this day that I have bought all that was Elimelech’s, and all that was Chilion’s and Mahlon’s, from the hand of Naomi. ¹⁰ Moreover, Ruth the Moabitess, the widow of Mahlon, I have acquired as my wife, to perpetuate the name of the dead through his inheritance, that the name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brethren and from his position at the gate. You are witnesses this day.’ ...¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife; and when he went in to her, the LORD gave her conception, and she bore a son....¹⁷ Also the neighbor women gave him a name, saying, ‘There is a son born to Naomi.’ And they called his name Obed. He is the father of Jesse, the father of David.

We’ve seen Naomi, who represents Israel in exile, return to the land supported by a Gentile, Ruth. Naomi, through the grace extended her by a Gentile, moves from unbelief and bitterness to belief in the God of Israel to restoration. And Ruth is not forsaken.

Boaz, who represents Jesus, redeems Ruth, the Moabitess (the enemy of Israel), the Gentile, and Naomi, the Jew! The book of Ruth so clearly lays out God’s entire plan of redemption for the world, for both Jew and Gentile. And, what are the results? We find the results in the name of the child born to Ruth – “Obed” – “Obed” means SERVANT – to serve God – to worship God! Salvation in Jesus the Messiah for both Jew and Gentile will result in our praises to God now and in our future home when we come before the King and serve Him and worship Him (Rom. 15:7-12).

QUESTIONS:

What was new to you in this lesson on Ruth?

Was there anything unclear?

Why is Ruth significant?

How would you explain the message of Ruth?

SUGGESTED HOMEWORK:

Reread Week 8’s handout

Select one teaching from the lesson into which you desire to dig deeper:

Find the cross references in Scripture to that teaching.

Begin to jot down observations about what you're reading in the cross references.

Ask questions and begin to find answers from Scripture.

Share with at least one person what you learned from this lesson.

Read Week 8 when you receive it.