



“A Story of Redemption” (Ruth)

Danny Hodges – OT3530

Intro: Only the second book in the Bible named after a woman. What is the other one? Esther. Esther is the story of a Jewish woman marrying a prominent Gentile, Xerxes, the king of ancient Persia, which is modern day Iran. Ruth is the story of a Gentile woman marrying a prominent Hebrew, the son of a “prince” in Israel named Boaz.

1:1-2 This move was prompted by a famine, and the famine was a result of the spiritual climate in Israel during this time. What was it that characterized the people of Israel in these days? (see Judges 21:25). Elimelek and his family simply do “as they see fit,” but it was a decision they would regret. God never told them to move to Moab. Abraham went to Egypt because of a famine, and it was there that he picked up Hagar (Gen.12).

Dry times are meant to move us toward God, not the world. What does God tell us to do during dry times?

II Chron.7:13-14 When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

1:3-5 This is the result of their move. Rather than blessings, they experience calamity, not only in Elimelek’s death, but in the forbidden marriages of his two sons to Moabite women (Deut.7:2-4). Then the two sons die, and Naomi ends up a widow with two Gentile daughter-in-laws. Ten years have now passed. What was no doubt meant to be a “brief sojourn” to escape famine turned into ten years. And during those ten years, nothing has gone right!

1:6-7 Judah means “praise,” and Bethlehem means “house of bread.”

1:8-13 Under O.T. Jewish Law, if a husband died, the next closest relative was required to marry his widow in order to carry on the family heritage (See Deut.25:7-10). Since Naomi had no other sons (and no husband), she had no way to provide husbands for her daughters-in-law. Even if she had more sons in the future, Orpah and Ruth would be too old to marry them by the time they grew up.

1:14 Nothing else is said or known about Orpah. She goes back to her people, and the gods of her people. A very poor, but understandable decision.

1:15-18 What would cause Ruth to make such a decision? This decision tells us volumes about her character, and her faith. Though a Moabite, she now commits to trusting the God of Israel. The Moabites were descendants of Lot's son Moab, a son born to him from an incestuous relationship with his oldest daughter (Gen.19:37). Summarize Lot's story, choosing the greener grass toward Sodom, probably met his wife in Sodom, became a leader in Sodom, his wife looked back toward Sodom and turned into a pillar of salt; It was the Moabites who hired Balaam to put a curse on Israel, and when God would not allow him to, Balaam taught Balak the king of Moab how to seduce the Israelite men (Num.25). The Moabites were godless pagans, and enemies of Israel.

Nehemiah 13:1 On that day the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) 3 When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

Deut.23: 2 No one born of a forbidden marriage nor any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. 3 No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. 4 For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam son of Beor from Pethor in Aram Naharaim to pronounce a curse on you.

1:19 Naomi was well known in Bethlehem, and the people of Bethlehem are "stirred" when she returns. It means they were murmuring, probably in regard to why she left in the first place, and why she would return with her Moabite daughter-in-law.

1:20-21 When Naomi's family left Bethlehem ten years earlier, they were looking for "greener grass." But instead of greener grass, she has returned destitute, broken, and bitter.

2:1-2 This was the welfare system in Israel.

* Lev.19: 10 Do not go over your vineyard a second time or pick up the grapes that have fallen. Leave them for the poor and **the alien**. I am the LORD your God.

* Deut.24: 21 When you harvest the grapes in your vineyard, do not go over the vines again. Leave what remains for the alien, the fatherless and the widow.

2:3 This is the providence of God.

2:4-23 Note verse 14, "Boaz offers bread and wine."

Note v.20, "guardian" or "kinsman" redeemer. This was a relative who could potentially redeem Naomi & Ruth by marrying Ruth and continuing the family line (Deut.25).

3:1-4 See Ezek.16:2-8

4:1-6 The kinsman redeemer who had the "first rights" under the law was not able to redeem Naomi and Ruth.

* Romans 8: 3 For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.

4:7-8 According to Deut.25:7-10 Ruth or Naomi would spit in this guy's face. But remember the culture of the day, Judges 21:25 Everyone did as he saw fit.

4:9-12 The elders "prayer" in vv.11-12 is quite interesting. The descendants of Perez became great leaders in Israel (see I Chron.27:3; Neh.11:6). But does anyone know Perez's family background? See Gen 38 & summarize. The whole time the soap opera of Genesis 38 is happening, Joseph is suffering in Egypt. And what was God's purpose in Joseph's sufferings? The redemption of sinners like Judah, as well as his family.

Acts 2:39 The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off...

4:13-17 WOW!

4:18a Perez, the child conceived in sin.

4:18b-21a See Matthew 1:3-5a. Rahab, the prostitute of Jericho! She put her faith in the God of Israel, was rescued from judgment, became part of the people of Israel, and ended up marrying an Israelite named Salmon. And who was Salmon? He was the son of Nashon.

Num.2:3 The leader of the people of Judah is Nahshon the son of Amminadab.

I Chron.2:10 in the old KJV and the ESV puts it this way: "Nahshon, **prince** of the children of Judah."

The family line of those God has redeemed is filled with former pagans, prostitutes, adulterers, perverts...SINNERS.

See I Timothy 1:15

CONCLUSION

Eph.2:8 For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.