

Deborah & Ruth (Go To Meeting) Michael Heiss—June 14, 2024

Years ago, when I first began attending the Church, I learned about different people/personalities. I decided that I was going to develop a folder entitled *Great Personalities*. It would include kings and priests, emperors, captains of industry, musicians, scientists, athletes, people who were successful. I wanted to know why they were successful.

- What did they do?
- What made them what they were?

In fact, I'm sad to say, and to a carnal point of view, one of my favorites in that file died just recently. He and I were about the same age. That was Jerry West, the great basketball guard for the Los Angeles Lakers. In fact, I first was introduced to him through an article entitled *The Toothpick Who Made It to the Top*, because he was a skinny guy; he didn't have the body for an athlete.

He was told, 'Oh, come on, Jerry, you're never going to be much of a basketball player.' But he wouldn't say *no*. To read about what he did and how he trained to become what he became is marvelous.

Tonight we're not going to be looking at basketball players or scientists or kings. We're going to be looking at two individuals from the pages of the Bible, both women. While I'm not going to sit here and tell you they were the greatest of the great, because God knows how He ranks them, but they are two of my favorites; probably my two favorite female personalities.

- their *personalities* were as different as the night is from day
- their *circumstances* were as different as night is from day

but:

- both persevered
- both showed loyalty to God
- both came through with flying colors

Amazing stories!

DEBORAH (Judges 4-5)

One thing you need to realize in the book of Judges—especially chapters 4 and 5—chapter 4 is written in prose, a clear narrative. Chapter 5 tells you the same thing as chapter 4 does, *but it is not in prose. It is in magnificent Hebrew poetry!*

- you have parallelism

- you have repetitions
- you have what might be considered hyperbole

That's all Hebrew poetry, but it is the same! This Deborah:

- Who is she?
- What did she do?
- How did she get to be where she was?

We read that she was a prophetess:

Judges 4:4: "And Deborah, a prophetess, the wife of Lapidoth, judged Israel at that time."

Being a prophetess wasn't necessarily an amazing thing. Other women were prophetesses:

- Miriam was a prophetess
- Huldah was a prophetess
- Anna was a prophetess

So, the fact that one is a prophetess is not by itself unusual. However, she judged Israel at that time, and what's more important, *apparently she was the only woman who was actually a judge!*

There are 11 judges mentioned in the book of Judges. Deborah was the only female, and she was the only one who actually held court. It is not said that of any other.

Verse 5: "...And the children of Israel came up to her for judgment."

She held court, v 5: "And she lived under the palm tree of Deborah between Ramah and Bethel in Mount Ephraim...."

So that is why she sought to be of the tribe of Ephraim. Can't tell for sure, but there's an indication there.

So, here she was *a judge and a prophetess!* And she was more, she was *a national leader!*

Verse 6—*this is the beginning of the call to fight the Canaanites*: "And she sent and called for Barak the son of Abinoam..."—*a national leader!*

She also commanded an army; what other woman did that. Furthermore, Deborah was a singer of songs.

Judges 5:1: "Then Deborah and Barak the son of Abinoam sang on that day, saying."

Verse 12: "Awake, awake, Deborah. Awake, awake, sing a song...." *So, here was Deborah:*

- a prophetess

- a judge
- a national leader
- a singer of songs
- designated a mother in Israel

That was the title!

Verse 7: “The leaders ceased in Israel, they ceased until I, Deborah, arose; until I arose, **a mother in Israel.**”

No other woman in the Bible held those titles. She was remarkable in that regard; also she was a national leader and a military commander all in one.

There were only two other people in the Bible who held those titles of prophet and military commander all rolled into one leader of armies: *Moses and David!* There were other prophets and, yes, there were military commanders, yes, but not all of those in one.

Now we look to see what Deborah did, and what had caused it.

Judges 4:1: “And the children of Israel again did evil in the sight of the LORD when Ehud was dead.”

This was the history of Israel over and over again. Just as soon as they got out of trouble, they went back into it. Some things just don’t change.

Verse 2: “And the LORD sold them into the hand of Jabin king of Canaan, who ruled in Hazor. The captain of his host was Sisera who lived in Harosheth of the nations. And the children of Israel cried to the LORD, for he had nine hundred chariots of iron....” (vs 2-3).

One of the reasons God did what He did here is He needed to take out those 900 chariots of iron. The land of Canaan, the Canaanites were on their way to world dominion in that area. No other nation had 900 iron chariots. Egypt had a good number of chariots, all right, and they were made of iron.

We’ll see what God did; “...He And he mightily oppressed the children of Israel twenty years” (v 3).

Verse 6: “And she sent and called for Barak... [there we go, *national leader; she was in charge*] ...the son of Abinoam out of Kedesh in Naphtali, and said to him, ‘Has not the LORD God of Israel commanded, saying, “Go and draw toward Mount Tabor, and take with you ten thousand men of the children of Naphtali and of the children of Zebulun?”’”

Look what God promises to do, v 7: “And I

will draw Sisera to you, the captain of Jabin’s army, at the river Kishon, together with his chariots and his multitude. And I will deliver him into your hands.”

Look what Barak’s response is. Can you believe this? *God just promised to deliver the Canaanites into his hand!*

Verse 8: “And Barak said to her, ‘If you will go with me, then I will go. But if you will not go with me. I will not go.’”

Remember the song that the Beatles had years ago: *I Want to Hold Your Hand.* What happened to the men of Israel?

Verse 9: “And she said, ‘I will surely go with you. But the journey that you take shall not be for your honor, for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.’....”

Now at first glance, well, that’s got to be Deborah, **but we’ll find out it wasn’t Deborah! It was Jael, the wife of Heber** (v 17), and see what a fighter she was.

Verse 9: “And she said, ‘I will surely go with you. But the journey that you take shall not be for your honor, for the LORD shall sell Sisera into the hand of a woman.’ And Deborah arose and went with Barak to Kedesh. And Barak called Zebulun and Naphtali to Kedesh. And he went up with ten thousand men at his feet. And Deborah went up with him” (vs 9-10).

Verse 12: “And they told Sisera that Barak the son of Abinoam had gone up to Mount Tabor. And Sisera gathered all his chariots, nine hundred chariots of iron, and all the people with him... (vs 12-13).

Verse 14: “And Deborah said to Barak, ‘Up!....’”

Now we have to back off here, because of what happened between v 13 and v 14? See, Bible doesn’t tell us, but *Josephus* does.

This is *Josephus* essentially saying the same thing as the Bible does, but he’s adding some points of information for us.

Deborah sent for Barak and bade him choose out ten thousand young men to go against the enemy, because God had said that number was sufficient and promised them victory.

God promised them, but they wouldn’t believe Him!

How many times do we find that throughout Scripture ***that the people just wouldn’t believe God!***

They might believe *in* Him, but believing *in God* is one thing, ***believing God***, *that's something else!*

When Barak said that he would not be the general unless she would arise and go with him, *Josephus points out* she had indignation at what he said and replied, 'Oh Barak, are you delivering up that manly authority, which God has given you, into the hand of a woman?'

Deborah went on to say, 'I don't reject it.' So, they collected the men. They marched up and they were opposing Sisera and his army. And Josephus says that:

They were so frightened at the multitude of these enemies that they were resolved to march off had not Deborah retained them and commanded them to fight the enemy that very day for that they should conquer them and God would be their assistance.

Go back to Scripture and we find that is what happened just before v 14.

Verse 14: "And Deborah said to Barak, 'Up! For this *is* the day in which the LORD has delivered Sisera into your hand...'"

You've got to get this picture: Here were two armies facing each other. The Israelites about to run and up comes this fiery woman, almost fire coming out of her eyes screaming, saying, ***fight! God promises you the victory!***

It was her bold dynamic presence that saved the day. A woman, a mother in Israel had to get the job done for no other man would. What a remarkable woman she was.

"...So, Barak went down from Mount Tabor and ten thousand men after him. And the LORD struck Sisera, and all the chariots, and all the army, with the edge of the sword in front of Barak..." (vs 14-15).

But that doesn't tell us how it happened. We'll see many times where it says God discomfited them. God did this or God did that. How did God do it? *Josephus actually gives us the answer!*

God told them He was going to bring Sisera up to a river. There was a Kishon River. Let's read what we have here:

So, the battle began and when they were come to a close fight there came down from heaven a great storm with a vast quantity of rain and hail, and the wind blew the rain in the face of the Canaanites and so darkened their eyes that their arrows, and slings were of no advantage to them nor

would the coldness of the air permit the soldiers to make use of the swords. The rain was so heavy and the water was so deep that the grass, the hill just sank down in mud.

Tanks don't do well in mud and neither do iron chariots do well in mud. So, God immobilized them; took care of the chariots.

"...Sisera got down from the chariot and fled on his feet" (v 15)—*He was scared!* He was a bully and bullies usually are cowards, so he ran.

We find out that Barak pursued after Sisera; v 15: "And the LORD struck Sisera, and all the chariots, and all the army, with the edge of the sword in front of Barak, so that Sisera got down from the chariot and fled on his feet.... [the chariot was useless and wouldn't budge] ...But Barak pursued after the chariots and the army, to Harosheth of the nations. And all the army of Sisera fell by the edge of the sword. There was not a man left. And Sisera fled on his feet to the tent of Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite, for *there was* peace between Jabin the king of Hazor and the house of Heber the Kenite" (vs 15-17).

So we won't spend a lot of time here, but Jael went out to meet Sisera; he enticed him in. 'Oh, come on in, rest yourself.'

Verse 20: "Again he said to her, 'Stand *in* the door of the tent, and it shall be when any man comes asking of you, saying, "Is there any man here?" You shall say, "No."' Then Jael... [this isn't very ladylike what she did] ...Then Jael, Heber's wife, took a peg of the tent and put a hammer in her hand, and went softly to him, and struck the peg into his temple, and beat it into the ground, for he was fast asleep and weary. So, he died" (vs 20-21).

Verse 22: "And behold, as Barak followed Sisera, Jael came out to meet him and said to him, 'Come and I will show you the man whom you seek.' And when he came into her tent, behold, Sisera lay dead, and the peg was in his temple. And on that day God subdued Jabin the king of Canaan before the children of Israel" (vs 22-23).

But while I might say, 'Jael, why did you do a thing like that? That wasn't ladylike, that wasn't feminine. Really, you shouldn't have done that.' Well, look at what God had to say about that.

Judges 5:24: "**Blessed among women** shall Jael the wife of Heber the Kenite be. **She shall be blessed above women** in the tent. He asked for water, and she gave *him* milk. She brought forth butter in a lordly dish. She put her hand to the peg and her right hand to the workman's hammer. She hammered Sisera; she smashed his head; she pierced

and struck through his temple” (vs 24-26).

Now we come into the poetry that I was talking about earlier:

Verse 27: “He bowed between her feet, he fell, he lay down. Between her feet he bowed; he fell. Where he bowed, there he fell down dead.”

That is magnificent Hebrew poetry describing what she did. So, here was Jael. The glory went to her because Barak was afraid. Why? *Didn't believe God!*

It took a woman; in fact, it took two women. It took Deborah to stand in the breach, and somehow get those men to fighting.

She was like Elizabeth I! If you remember Queen Elizabeth, she was some woman at the Battle of the Spanish Armada, when the ships were approaching and her troops were on the beaches and on the hills overlooking. Of course, Sir Francis Drake and the other navy men were out there in the sea.

There she was riding up to them, encouraging them, holding high her banner. The men loved her. They respected her. There was the Queen with them, not cowering in the castle, not wondering, I don't know what it's going to be like.

I don't know what's going to happen. She was out there dynamic and bold. Queen Elizabeth was a remarkable woman! In fact, if you know her story, she should never have lived. She should have died. She should have been executed, **but God spared her!**

God knew He was going to use her and He did, preserving the British Empire, the nation of Britain against the Spanish Armada.

That's what we have with Deborah, a woman who was strong, resolute, believed God, never wavered, never thought 'I don't know if we can do this or not.' But 'God is going to give us the victory.' **She knew it and she came through with flying colors!**

She was one of the longest reigning judges in the history of Israel. We know she reigned for 40 years because the land had rest 40 years, but she was judging Israel before that. According to those who study the chronology, I can't prove this because I don't have that material in front of me. But according to these individuals who study it, she could well have judged Israel for close to 60 years, no other judge really came that close.

A woman in Israel! I love Deborah. She was a fighter and never, never gave up! Well, that was Deborah; **bold and dynamic!**

RUTH

Ruth is a completely different picture, a different woman, different circumstances. But her resolution was just as strong and God honored her in two specific ways. We're going to see that.

The book of Ruth took place during the early days of the period of judges. We'll see that in the chronology. It was very, very early on; it wasn't very late.

Ruth 1:1: “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 in Judah went to live in the country of Moab, he and his wife and his two sons.”

Famine in the land, not really enough food. So, off they go to Moab. And there both sons married Moabite women, but tragedy strikes. Elimelech dies and both the sons die, and there's Naomi left alone.

Yes, she has two daughters-in-law who love her, but what's she going to do? She heard via the grapevine that the famine had eased in Judah. So, she decided that she was going to go back.

Verse 8: “And Naomi said to her two daughters-in-law, ‘Go, return each one to your mother's house. May the LORD deal kindly with you, as you have dealt with the dead and with me. May the LORD grant you that you may find rest, each in the house of your husband.’ Then she kissed them, and they lifted up their voices and wept. And they said to her, ‘Surely **we will return with you to your people**’” (vs 8-10)—*to Israel!*

I've often wondered what was there about Naomi? Here were these two daughters-in-law who were Moabites. The Bible doesn't speak too kindly of Moab. Yet they were willing to leave Moab and go to the land of Israel with Naomi.

Well, Naomi was pretty much set on saying, ‘No girls, you stay here.’

Verse 11: “And Naomi said, ‘Turn again, my daughters. Why will you go with me? *Are* there yet sons in my womb, that they may be your husbands?’”

‘I can't offer you anything. I've got nothing to offer you.’

Verse 12: “Turn again, 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 also tonight, and should also bear sons, would you wait for them until they were grown? Would you shut yourselves up, and not have husbands *until then*?”

No, my daughters, for it makes me very sad for your sakes that the hand of the LORD has gone out against me.”

She knew God was at work, and yes, God was at work because God had a plan. He knew what he was doing! He always does!

It’s just that all of us are on an NTK basis—need to know. God knows what he’s doing; He always does.

Verse 14: “And they lifted up their voices and wept again. And Orpah kissed her mother-in-law. But Ruth clung to her. And she [Naomi] said, ‘Behold, your sister-in-law has gone back to her people and to her gods. Return back *with* your sister-in-law’” (vs 14-15).

Here comes that rallying cry, that absolute statement, *bulldogged determination!* How Ruth had it in her, I don’t know, but read what she says. We’ve read this in the past, but read it again.

Verse 16: “And Ruth said, ‘Do not beg me to leave you, to return from following after you. For where you go, I will go. Where you stay, I will stay. Your people shall be my people, and your God my God. Where you die, I will die, and there I will be buried. May the LORD do so to me, and more also, *if anything* but death parts you and me’” (vs 16-17).

Now, when she says here, “...May the LORD do so to me...” This is an oath, which in a sense she’s saying,

If I depart from you, Naomi, if I leave you for any reason, if we part company for any reason except death, may God kill me.

She is declaring absolute loyalty.

Now, this, you’ve got to realize, was unheard of. A person in the ancient world changing religions.

Let me read to you part of an article from the *Archaeological Biblical Review* describing just this situation. Talking about Ruth and repeating her statement:

“...Your people shall be my people, and your God my God” *is a radical thought because it signals that Ruth is changing her identity in a world here that was inconceivable!*

The ancient world had no mechanism for religious conversion or change of citizenship. The very notion was unthinkable. Understand: ***unthinkable!*** Religion and people-hood defined one’s ethnic identity and this could be no more changed than the color of one’s skin.

A Moabite was always a Moabite wherever he or she lived and indeed Ruth is referred to throughout the story as a Moabitess. But from Ruth’s point of view, she is becoming an Israelite. She is joining herself to Naomi not only on the private level but on the national people-hood level.

Jesus made a statement. In fact, He had two of them.

Luke 14:26: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother... [now we understand He means *love less by comparison*] ... and wife, and children, and brothers and sisters, and, in addition, his own life also, he cannot be My disciple.”

Ruth did this a thousand years prior to the time when Jesus—as the Son of God, uttered them. She sacrificed everything:

- father/mother
- sister/brother
- nation
- everything she ever knew

All in a rearview mirror; ***she set her sights on serving the God of Israel and Naomi***, her mother-in-law.

Now, this again, was a revolution, unheard of! *That was what Ruth was made of!*

I’m sure the Spirit of God was moving; I’m sure she was helped that way, although we’re not specifically told that. But I think that’s true. And when she said that, Naomi was speechless; she couldn’t do anything.

Ruth 1:18: “When she saw that she was determined to go with her, then she quit speaking to her. And both of them went until they came to Bethlehem. And it came to pass, when they had come to Bethlehem, all the city was moved concerning them, and they said, ‘*Is this Naomi?*’ And she said to them, ‘Do not call me Naomi, call me Mara. For the Almighty has dealt very bitterly with me’” (vs 18-20).

Remember the word *Mara*? Ring a bell with anybody? Exo, 15: the well’s water was bitter, poisonous, and God told them, okay, take this tree over here, part it, put it in the well, and the waters are clean.

Naomi says, “...call me Mara...”—she was at certain amount of bitterness in spirit. Yes, she had Ruth with her, but her coming home was bitter-sweet.

Verse 21: “I went out full, and the LORD has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since the LORD has testified against me, and

the Almighty has afflicted me?’ So, Naomi returned; and Ruth, the Moabitess, her daughter-in-law, was with her, returning out of the fields of Moab. And they came to Bethlehem at the beginning of barley harvest” (vs 21-22).

Ruth 2:1: “And Naomi *had* a kinsman of her husband’s, a mighty man of wealth, of the family of Elimelech. And his name *was* Boaz.”

Why does this appear here? *To lead us to the rest of the story, because we’re going to learn about Boaz!* Boaz is going to play a prominent part in this story.

Verse 2: “And Ruth the Moabitess said to Naomi, ‘Let me now go to the field and glean ears of grain after *him* in whose sight I shall find grace.’ And she said to her, ‘Go, my daughter.’ And she went. And she came and gleaned in the field after the reapers. And she happened to come upon a part of the field of Boaz, who *was* of the kindred of Elimelech” (vs 2-3).

Oh, just happened to happen, as luck would have it. No! No! No! This was designed. God was working, and He knew what He was doing. He was going to line up Ruth, she was going to be the ancestor of David, and that of the Christ, as well.

But He’s working through this. They didn’t know it, and we don’t even know it, yet.

Verse 4: “And behold, Boaz came from Bethlehem and said to the reapers, ‘The LORD *be* with you.’ And they answered him, ‘The LORD bless you.’ And Boaz said to his servant who was set over the reapers, ‘Whose young woman *is* this?’ And the servant who was set over the reapers answered and said, ‘It *is* the young Moabite woman who came back with Naomi out of the country of Moab.’ And she said, ‘Please let me glean and gather after the reapers among the sheaves.’ So, she came, and has continued from the morning until now, although she rested a little in the house. And Boaz said to Ruth, ‘Will you not listen, my daughter? Do not go to glean in another field...’” (vs 4-8). *So, Boaz wants her safe and sound!*

“...neither go away from here, but stay here close by my maidens. *Let* your eyes *be* on the field that they reap, and follow after them. Have I not commanded the young men that they shall not touch you?....” (vs 8-9).

Boaz read them the riot act, don’t touch her or else. I don’t know what the *or else* would have been, but they got the point. They left her alone.

“...And when you are thirsty, go to the vessels and drink of that which the young men have drawn.’ Then she fell on her face and bowed herself

to the ground, and said to him, ‘Why have I found grace in your eyes, that you should take notice of me, since I *am* a foreigner?’” (vs 9-10).

Now this was not the normal word for foreigner. This was a deprecating word. This was a word that implies *filthy* foreigner, *derogatory!* That’s how she views herself.

I have no right to really be here. I came with my mother-in-law. I resolved to be here. And yet you’re really accepting me.

She was dumbfounded! But that was her humility. This is Ruth. How many women would do that? *But she did!* So, she fell on her face.

Verse 11: “And Boaz answered and said to her, ‘It has been fully shown to me all that you have done to your mother-in-law since the death of your husband, and you left your father...’”

Here it is; what did Jesus say about being a disciple?

“...you left your father and your mother and the land of your birth, and have come to a people whom you did not know before now. May the LORD repay your work, and may a full reward be given you from the LORD God of Israel, under Whose wings you have come to seek refuge” (vs 11-12).

Little did Boaz know what kind of a reward God was going to give Ruth and what part he was going to play in that reward.

Verse 13: “Then she said, ‘Let me find favor in your sight, my lord, for you have comforted me; for you have spoken kindly to your handmaid, though I am not like one of your handmaidens.’ And Boaz said to her at mealtime, ‘Come here and eat of the bread and dip your bit in the vinegar.’ And she sat beside the reapers. And he handed her roasted *grain*, and she ate and was satisfied, and left. And when she had risen up to glean, Boaz commanded his young men saying, ‘Let her glean even among the sheaves, and do not rebuke her’” (vs 13-15).

Verse 17: “And she gleaned in the field until the evening...”—*and goes back to Naomi!*

Verse 19: “And her mother-in-law said to her, ‘Where have you gleaned today? And where did you work? Blessed is he who took notice of you.’ And she told her mother-in-law with whom she had worked, and said, ‘The man’s name with whom I worked today *is* Boaz.’ And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law, ‘Blessed *is* he of the LORD, Who has not left off His kindness to the living and to the dead.’ And Naomi said to her, ‘The man *is* near of kin to us, he is one of our closest kinsmen.’ And Ruth the Moabitess said, ‘He said to me also, “You

shall keep close by my young men whom I have *working* until they have ended all my harvest.” And Naomi said to her daughter-in-law Ruth, ‘Good, my daughter. You go out with his maidens so that others do not meet you in any other field.’ So, she kept close...” (vs 19-23).

Now, legally speaking, Ruth had no obligation to serve her mother-in-law. And her mother-in-law, Naomi, had no legal obligation to help Ruth. That’s just the way it was. They had no obligation to help each other at all.

But Naomi says to herself, ‘Ruth needs a husband.’ So she knows of the law of when two brothers or when one brother dies before having a child, then the nearest relative is to come in and provide seed for the deceased husband.

Ruth 3:3: “Therefore, wash yourself, and anoint yourself, and put your clothing upon you, and go down to the threshing floor. But do not make yourself known to the man until he has finished eating and drinking. And when he lies down, you mark the place where he lies, and you shall go in and uncover his feet and lie down. And he will tell you what you shall do” (vs 3-4).

What does Ruth say to Naomi?

Verse 5: “And she said to her, ‘All that you say, I will do.’”

Subservient, obedient! A remarkable one, this Ruth. The interesting thing is, it says:

Verse 6: “And she went down to the threshing floor and did according to all that her mother-in-law had told her. And when Boaz had eaten and had drunk and his heart was merry... [he was feeling good, all right] ...he went to lie down at the end of the heap of grain. And she came softly and uncovered his feet, and lay down” (vs 6-7).

We’re not 100% sure what to make of this. It could be that she was uncovering his feet, but feet also is a euphemism for one’s organ. What exactly happened here? *I’m not so sure!* But nevertheless:

Verse 8: “And it came to pass at midnight, the man was startled and turned himself. And, behold, a woman lay at his feet. And he said, ‘Who *are* you?’ And she answered, ‘I *am* your handmaid Ruth. And you shall spread your skirt over your handmaid, for you *are* a kinsman-redeemer’” (vs 8-9).

Boaz knew what she meant. In Deut. 25, you can read about that. It talks about it, two brothers, one doesn’t have any children and dies, the other one was to marry the widow, provide the child so that the name will not be blotted out of Israel. Boaz recognizes that.

Verse 10: “And he said, ‘Blessed *be* you of the LORD, my daughter. You have shown more kindness in the end than at the beginning, in that you did not follow young men, whether poor or rich.’”

Boaz knows he’s old enough to be her father. They’re not going to grow old together. He’s going to die before she will; he knows that. He’s marveling at the fact that Ruth was willing to follow the laws of Israel.

She said, ‘your God will be my God, your people my people.’ She agreed to obey God in whatever God said, even if it meant that she would be a widow later on.

- that was her belief
- that was her faith
- that was her devotion to the God of Israel

Few people can that be said of, but we could say it of Ruth!

Verse 11: “And now, my daughter, do not fear. I will do to you all that you ask. For all the men in the city of my people know that you *are* a woman of virtue. And now it is true that I *am* your kinsman redeemer. But there is also a kinsman nearer than I. Stay tonight, and it shall be that in the morning...” (vs 11-13).

We know the story. The council was meeting!

Ruth 4:1: “And Boaz went up to the gate and sat down there. And behold, the near kinsman of whom Boaz spoke came by. And he said *to him*, ‘Such a one! Turn aside, sit down here.’ And he turned aside and sat down. And he took ten men of the elders of the city and said, ‘Come sit down here.’ And they sat down” (vs 1-2).

Look, here’s Ruth, redeemed land; you have the right to redeem the land and Ruth. *He says, ‘No, I can’t do that.’*

I don’t think it was the land so much. For some reason, he did not want to get hooked up with Ruth for whatever reason, so he backed off.

So he took ten men of the elders of the city and announced that they would be married according to the law and he would redeem her. The kinsman said in v 6, ‘I cannot do it.’

Verse 9: “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. Moreover, Ruth of Moab, the wife of Mahlon, I have acquired to be my wife, to raise up the name of the dead on his inheritance, so that the

name of the dead may not be cut off from among his brothers and from the gate of his place. You *are* witnesses this day.’ And all the people in the gate, and the elders, said, ‘We *are* witnesses. May the LORD make the woman who has come into your house like Rachel and like Leah, for these two built the house of Israel. And may you do worthily in Ephratah, and be famous in Bethlehem” (vs 9-11). *Now that’s an honor; it really is!*

Verse 12: “‘And let your house be like the house of Pharez, whom Tamar bore to Judah, of the seed which the LORD shall give you of this young woman.’ And Boaz took Ruth, and she became his wife. And when he went in to her, the LORD enabled her to conceive. And she bore a son. And the women said to Naomi, ‘Blessed *be* the LORD, who has not left you this day without a kinsman redeemer, so that his name may be famous in Israel. And he shall be to you as a restorer of life, and a nourisher of your old age. **For your daughter-in-law who loves you has borne him, she who is better to you than seven sons**” (vs 12-15). *That is a tribute to Ruth, an honor!*

Verse 16: “And Naomi took the child and laid it in her bosom, and became nurse to it. And the women, her neighbors, 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**” (vs 16-17).

Then we have this genealogy. We’re going to look at three genealogies.

Verse 18: “And these *are* the generations of Pharez. Pharez begat Hezron, And Hezron begat Ram, and Ram begat Amminadab, And Amminadab begat Nahshon, and Nahshon begat Salmon, And **Salmon begat Boaz...** [that’s our Boaz that we’ve been talking about] **...and Boaz begat Obed, And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David**” (vs 18-22).

What we learn here is that the Book of Ruth is a bridge. It is a bridge between the era of the judges when Israel was not a nation to the united monarchy.

Ruth 1:1: “Now, it came to pass in the days when the judges ruled...”

So, the scene of this story is in the days of the judges, and this is the spring of the year. We talk about the barley harvest, the wheat harvest; Pentecost time.

Ruth 4:22: “And Obed begat Jesse, and Jesse begat David”—*the united monarchy*. It’s a bridge between the two. It’s showing here that Boaz was the ancestor of David.

Well now let’s look at two other genealogies. We will see how God honored Ruth.

Matthew 1:5: “And Salmon begat Boaz of Rachab...”

That’s Rahab of Jericho, the scarlet thread. Was she a harlot? Was she an innkeeper? *But she’s mentioned!*

“...and Boaz begat Obed of Ruth...” (v 5). *Ruth is mentioned in the genealogy!*

Verse 6: “And Jesse begat David the king; and David the king begat Solomon of **the one who had been wife** of Uriah.”

Is that the best God could do? *Doesn’t mention the name!* Oh, that wasn’t the best God could do, but that was the best that God was going to do. This was a bit of a snub and a put down because of what Solomon did. So, his mother isn’t even mentioned here, *but Ruth is honored in the genealogy*, which goes all the way back going on to the birth of Jesus Christ.

So Jesus the Messiah was part of all of that. One of the enemies of Israel, of whom it is said, not to the 10th generation will someone be allowed from Moab into Israel. Ruth was the exception.

Luke 3:31: “*The son of Meleas, the son of Menna, the son of Mattatha, **the son of Nathan, the son of David**.*” *Solomon’s line isn’t even here!*

But this also was the line of Ruth; Ruth is here. God honored Ruth by putting her in the chronology. God also honored Ruth in another way. She is one of only two women to have a name of a book in the Bible.

The book of Ruth is read every Pentecost in every Jewish synagogue across the world, because that’s one of (inaudible) laws, the five books, each one assigned to a Holy Day or a holiday. Purim is not a Holy Day, but it’s a holiday.

This book is going to be read; it’s in a way like a movie marquee. There you are, there’s the movie there it is the Book of Ruth, starring Ruth. Her name’s up there. God honored her. ***She was beloved of God, along with Deborah!***

Two women, faithful, resolved, steadfast, stubborn in a way:

- who would not falter
- who would not fall down on the job
- who gave God the credit

That’s important!

They both gave. Remember Deborah whom God is going to give the victory? Yes!

Ruth went and did whatever Naomi told her to do. She followed all the principles in the law pertaining to Israel, which of course, pertained to her. ***She always obeyed!*** This quiet, simple handmaid, who in reality was more than a handmaid.

Now maybe you can see why they're my favorites. I love them. I read their stories and I think to myself as I read them:

- Am I as good as they were?
- Am I living up in my lifetime to the Laws of God
- Am I living up to His principles?
- Am I sacrificing?
- Am I doing enough?
- Am I doing enough as they did?

Sometimes I wonder!

They were wonderful women, gallant, valued women! We should all thank God for their example.

I would urge you, if you can, read more about Ruth (Book of Ruth) and about Deborah (Judges 4-5). That's all there is. Doesn't take long. Take your time reading it.

Ruth 1-4, we went through it in a cursory manner because there is not enough time to really dig in. But at least we get to feel for these women. I'm thankful for them. ***Let us all be thankful to God that we have their example in His Word! And may we be as righteous as they were—two women: Deborah and Ruth!***

Scriptural References:

Deborah

- 1) Judges 4:4-6
- 2) Judges 5:1, 12, 7
- 3) Judges 4:1-3, 6-10, 12-17, 20-23
- 4) Judges 5:24-27

Ruth

- 1) Ruth 1:1-5-12, 14-17
- 2) Luke 14:26
- 3) Ruth 1:18-22
- 4) Ruth 2:1-15, 17, 19-23
- 5) Ruth 3:3-13
- 6) Ruth 4:1-2, 9-22
- 7) Ruth 1:1
- 8) Ruth 4:22
- 9) Matthew 1:5-6
- 10) Luke 3:31

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Exodus 15
- Deuteronomy 25

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